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## GERMAN LITERATURE

# Education of a democrat

S. S. Prawer

THOMAS MANN  
Diaries 1918-1939  
Selection and Foreword by Hermann Kesten  
Translated by Richard and Clara Winston  
Clarendon Press, £16.95.  
023975136

For much of his long life, Thomas Mann would retire every evening to set down, briefly, his impressions of the day that had just passed. He would chronicle haircuts and meals and visits to the dentist as well as encounters with the famous and the obscure; he would recall what he had read and what he had written and meditate on social and political events. He found comfort in this activity, this attempt to capture each passing day; not because he wanted to reread and remember, but rather because he wanted "to take stock, to review, to maintain awareness, to achieve perspective" (February 11, 1934). On at least two occasions, he burnt a large number of the notebooks he filled in this way; but he left behind, with directions that they were not to be opened until twenty years after his death, sealed packages that contained all his diaries from March 1933 until 1955, as well as one that he had kept from 1918 to 1921. The Fischer Verlag began publication of these writings in 1977, under the editorship of Peter de Mendelssohn (reviewed in the TLS, April 14, 1978 and October 10, 1980) and it is from the first four volumes of this edition that Hermann Kesten has made the selection now under review. He has done his task well. Realizing that he would have to leave out at least four times as much as he put in, he made the sensible decision never to cut an individual entry. English readers will therefore find far fewer mental snapshots than those who can consult the German originals; but each snapshot is complete, untrimmed, and as unretouched as competent translation will allow.

Though he called what he wrote in these diaries "my life's secrets" and would never permit anyone but himself to open them, Thomas Mann did, on at least one occasion, give his readers some insight into their nature and content. This happened in *The Education of a Democrat*, which is full of carefully chosen quotations from journals kept during the composition of that novel—a novel that itself clearly

made use of earlier diaries, including those of 1918-1921 which Mann preserved when he burnt so many others in the garden incinerator behind his house in Pacific Palisades. The full fascination these daily jottings can exert has, however, only now become apparent. Their intermingling of the public and the private, of profound concern with world affairs and regard for the author's own comfort and the well-being of his family; their quick, telling impressions of hundreds of personages, high and low, who crossed Mann's path; their intelligent judgments on a large variety of books and authors; their honesty in recording emotions, impulses and actions even when these seemed less than admirable; their account of German and European politics in two important periods from the vantage-point of an intelligent, sensitive and concerned observer—all these features make for absorbing reading.

On the packages in which he had sealed his diaries Mann wrote that they were "of no literary value". But no one who reads them can fail to notice that they contain nothing slapdash, nothing that is not tellingly and exactly formulated; and even if they are read in the abbreviated rather than the full version, they soon appear to coalesce into a form which resembles that of the diary of a writer. Indeed, by substituting *The Education of a Democrat* for *Diaries*, Mann himself appears to place them in a line that leads from Gide's *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* to Günter Grass's *From the Diary of a Sinner*. And once we begin to appreciate the "documentary novel" effect of reading these diaries in sequence, they soon take on for us affinities with an older genre: that of the novel of education and cultivation, the *Erziehungsroman* or *Bildungsroman*. There is one significant difference, however. In the central tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* to Mann's own *Magic Mountain*, the educators tend to be much more interesting than the young man they educate. In these diaries, on the other hand, the man whose "formation" is being chronicled is clearly a personality as rich and as complex as any that influences or repels him.

The "education" the diaries depict falls into two well-marked stages. In the first section, 1918-1921, we watch the transformation of a self-appointed defender of a Prussian discipline that he saw incarnated in the German state which fought the First World War, an advocate of a German *Kultur* whose spirituality and life-dedication seemed deeper and more valuable than rationalistic, word-obsessed Western "civilization", a believer in "machgeschützte Innerlichkeit", inwardness protected and defended by those whose business it was to run the state—we watch the gradual transformation of a man of this kind into a champion and supporter of a democratic republic. The fact that his progress in this direction is anything but smooth makes the record all the more fascinating. We see him cling to many of his old preconceptions, watch his horror of what he regarded as the "anarchy" of the *Räterepublik* in Munich and his hatred of those who imposed the Treaty of Versailles on defeated Germany; at one point he is so ready to cry a plague on both houses that he sees even communism as preferable to a democracy whose spokesman was Woodrow Wilson. None the less this portion of the diaries shows very clearly his inevitable progress towards what we know to lie beyond its closing date of 1921: reconciliation with his brother Heinrich, against whose views his *Meditations of an Unpolitical Man* had been largely directed; and his commitment to the Weimar constitution which he affirmed in his essay *On the German Republic* (1922).

When the diaries resume in 1933—on March 15 of the year in which Hitler came to power—we find a Thomas Mann whose commitment to Weimar democracy was so deep that the new rulers could not but see in him an enemy to be persecuted. He was away from Germany at the time, on a visit to Switzerland; and the news he had from his home in Munich soon convinced him that it would be inadvisable to return in the immediate future. Although, as the diaries make crystal-clear, he never felt the slightest doubt about the evil and unprincipled nature of the Hitler régime, he refused at first to speak out publicly against the new order. He was anxious, above all, to ensure that the books into which so much of his life had gone, and would continue to go, were not denied a German readership. The diaries then show, with welcome clarity, how he gradually overcame his hesitations and vaulted boldly into the political limelight as champion of a better Germany than that which had

chosen, and continued to support, National Socialism. The decisive date is December 30, 1936—the day on which Mann revealed his abhorrence of what was being done in Germany's name in an open letter to the Dean of Bonn University who had signed the decree revoking the honorary doctorate bestowed on him in happier times. Mann had in fact become a Czech citizen shortly before; but despite this symbolic assumption of another nationality Mann would henceforth see himself as a representative of a better and truer Germany in exile. The story the diaries have to tell ends, for the time being, with his migration from Switzerland to the United States just before the outbreak of the Second World War; but there are, of course, diaries from a later period that still await translation.

The process of *Bildung* chronicled in the section that extends from 1933 to 1939 is complicated by deep-rooted prejudices and long ingrained attitudes. The role that Jewish intellectuals had played in Munich's political life at the end of the First World War, when some of them stepped into the limelight by becoming officials of a short-lived revolutionary government, had horrified him, and although his wife came from a Jewish family he does confess, in the early 1930s, that he continued to have some sympathy with anti-Jewish resentments. After the clear break of 1936, however, this too changes; he welcomes many of his associations with Jewish refugees, and it is pleasing to report that it was a review by the editor of the present selection from his diary, Hermann Kesten, which induced him to write, on January 28, 1938: "Absolutely true that German literature needs the Jew! When he looked at what he described as the resentful petty-bourgeois scum which had floated to the top in Germany, he reflected with bitter amusement that in the mouths of criminal types like Streicher, theories of racial superiority immediately refuted themselves. His emigré status, coupled with doubts about Germany's territorial integrity if National Socialism led it into a war it was bound to lose, made him reflect that Germans might have the same destiny as the Jews in the Diaspora. Perhaps history has in fact intended for them the role of the Jew... to be one day scattered throughout the world and to view their existence with an intellectually proud self-irony." That this did not

make him into an uncritical philo-semitic will be obvious to all readers of *Doctor Faustus*; it appears from the diaries too, where we find him fastidiously shrinking from the idea that he might be judged to have something in common with such fellow-exiles as Alfred Kerr or Kurt Tucholsky.

Even in the privacy of his secret jottings we find the exiled Thomas Mann constantly standing on his dignity. He was, of course, financially more secure than most other exiles, and his world fame ensured him a welcome denied to more marginal men. When one contrasts the life these journals reveal, the comfort and even luxury Mann and his family enjoyed in Switzerland and the United States, with the hand-to-mouth existence of Robert Musil, one can easily understand the latter's resentment at the apparent good fortune of a writer he judged to be inferior to himself. Installed in some Grand Hotel far beyond the means of most refugees, Mann complains to his diary: "I find everything in this cultural milieu shabby, rickety, uncomfortable, and beneath my accustomed standards"; and he continues to bemoan his "ghastly and dreary déclassé existence" until he has managed, with the help of wife, children, and hired servants, to re-create, first in Switzerland and then in the US, the precise ambience of his Munich study, including his desk with Egyptian figurines and other accustomed appearances.

Hermann Kesten includes in his selection several passages in which Mann's undoubted sense of humour and delightful irony desert him and he becomes merely pompous; but he spares us the distressing spectacle of the moral obtuseness into which his sense of his own choiceness, and of the dignity of his calling, could lead Mann on occasion. When, for example, news filtered into Switzerland that Theodor Lessing, a writer of some distinction, had committed suicide, Mann's reaction was to write, in the diary: "The unfortunate death of Lessing has been brutally done to death in the early days of a new régime, he declares himself 'horrified by an end of this kind, not because it is an end, but because it is so miserable and may be suitable for a man like Theodor Lessing' (und eben Lessing anstehen mag), but not for me". The phrase I have italicized in this diary-entry of September 1, 1933, represents, in my view, a deplorable lapse of which the later

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## Awesomely responsible

Peter Kemp

T. F. Staley (Editor)

Twentieth-Century Women Novelists  
224pp. Macmillan. £20.  
0 333 28128 4

In his introduction to *Twentieth-Century Women Novelists* — a collection of essays designed "to show the considerable vitality of the contemporary British novel written by women" — Thomas Staley remarks on "the difficulty of making too many critical generalisations". But getting fustian particulars correct would seem to be his primary problem. Throughout his introduction, large statements flow confidently: feminism has imposed "awesome responsibility" on modern women; it has "expanded and altered the nature of reality", raising "some of the deepest philosophical and psychological questions of our age". References to the specific, though, show Staley blundering bemusedly. Olivia Manning's *Balkan Trilogy* — which roams around Romania, travels from Bucharest to Athens, and ends with its protagonists en route for Cairo — is singled out as a work whose "stage is deliberately confined". As an instance of "women novelists whose careers began in the 1960s", he cites Barbara Pym. Her first novel was published in 1950; four others followed in the same decade; apart from *No Fond Return of Love* in 1961, she published nothing in the 1960s, only re-emerging with *Quartet in Autumn* in 1977. Of this latter book, Staley stresses what he sees as the crucial influence of increasing feminist consciousness — asks rhetorically, "had it not been for the changed atmosphere and new awareness, would her work have come to the attention of critics?" Unfortunately for his case, the answer is an unequivocal yes: his would-be buttress is a battering-ram. The "rediscovery" of Barbara Pym had nothing to do with the women's movement. As is widely known, it was after two contributors to a TLS

symposium in 1977 named her as the most underrated writer of the century, that she began to be published again. Given the standard set by the editor, it's no surprise to find that most of the essays are wobbly on such matters as titles, order of composition, and narrative incidentals. But the opening piece — on "Doris Lessing's recent fiction" — by Sydney Janet Kaplan, is still notably astonishing. Lavishly paradoxical, Ms Kaplan simultaneously describes *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974) as Lessing's "most recent novel" and refers to "later" published novels. These — the *Canopus in Argos* books, Lessing's exercises in Sufi SF — are not discussed. Nor, as it turns out, is *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, most of the essay being given over to an even earlier book, *The Summer Before the Dark*. Often the commentary on this is not much more than a springboard for "look-at-me!" exhibitionism. Girlish cries — "How I hope her vision of the future will not come true!" "It intrigues me, worries me, infuriates me" — punctuate the pages. Ms Kaplan keeps bursting out of her paragraphs. And there is much fond garrulosity about her gaffes of yesterday: "At that time I believed . . . 'Some years ago I thought I saw . . . etc."

Kingsley Widmer's essay on Iris Murdoch lifts the level somewhat. He is hampered by a style like Sellotape, sticking words wherever possible into hyphenated chains: a "nearly saint-in-everyday-life daughter-in-law", "the foolish-become-wise Effingham", "burdened-with-pull-forlornly basarid", and so on. He makes some odd assessments — as that *The Bell*, generally regarded as Murdoch's most solidly naturalistic novel, is particularly "contrived and thin on character genesis". And there are indications that he has sometimes misunderstood the books: the Tchaikovsky music endlessly played by Celia in *The Time of the Angels*, for example, isn't there to suggest he has "saccharine" tastes, but — usually it's ballet music — to underline his affinities with Siva, the Hindu deity associated

with dancing. Still, the essay does offer a detailed and conscientious, if never especially original, account of Murdoch's work. The piece on Muriel Spark, making much of her "dandy" characteristics and itself affecting a style elaborately printed out with words like *sprezzatura* and *maquillage*, is likewise résumé rather than reappraisal; but it gives a sprightly summary of her writing and its main preoccupations. Narrower than that of Muriel Spark, Barbara Pym's fictional world — one where the women are generally in surplus and the men in surplus — receives intelligent scrutiny from Barbara Brothers, a critic as professionally observant as the anthropologists who also congregate inside these novels.

Some of the other essays are damagingly limited. Harry Mooney's study of Olivia Manning, focusing on *The Balkan Trilogy* and virtually ignoring its sequel, *The Levant Trilogy*, looks especially lopsided. Throughout these six novels a careful pattern unravels: to confine attention to the first three books, as Mooney does, is barely to see the half of it. Some essays cut themselves off from illuminating biographical points, or draw on them only fitfully. Rosemary Jackson, in a polemical but perceptive piece on Susan Hill, reproves her for abandoning fiction for marriage, seeing this as in keeping with the running-away that runs through her work. But other enlightening connections are neglected — as when she fails to put the author's penchant for recurrent images of "a cold, frozen country, of ice, snow, still water, frost, winter", within the context of her custom of writing her fiction each winter on the East Anglian coast.

Two essays stand out. A piece by Bernard Benstock on the detective fiction of P. D. James sleuths through her life and work in a very keen-eyed way, rounding up anything likely to yield useful information. He doesn't organize his findings into as revealing a pattern as he might. But his evidence makes it clear that what gives James's work its personal imprint is a

fascination with pain. Many of her settings — a hospital, an asylum for the incurably crippled — enclose physical instances of this. Sexual and emotional suffering are *rite*. Her chief investigator, Dalgleish, is a man who has "insulated himself carefully against pain" after traumatic personal tragedy. To be a murderer, one of them explains, is to have "forfeited . . . even the right to feel pain". Pain is the motive that goads James's killers to cause further pain; frequently, the processes of detection merely add to the agony. Tormented by the sad variety of woe unearthed by his probes, Dalgleish is also subjected to vividly rendered physical misery — fingers smashed by a cripple's leg-iron, an ugly bullet wound, serious head injury, a near-fatal illness.

As acute as Benstock when it comes to spotting the salient, Gail Cunningham, in her essay on Margaret Drabble, shows stronger powers of organization. The result is an elegant and well-stocked thesis. While registering a marked change in the atmosphere of Drabble's fiction — from the sunny perkiness of *A Summer Bird-Cage* to the chilly slowings-down of *The Ice Age* — she sees it as retaining one basic feature: a concern with dichotomies. Examples of this are crisply marshalled. Drabble's fiction is at once responsive to the nineteenth-century novel and mid-twentieth-

## Militant masculinity

Penny Boumelha

HILARY SIMPSON

D. H. Lawrence and Feminism  
174pp. Northern Illinois University Press. \$20.  
0 87580 090 4

It is easy, through a kind of conceptual slippage, to assume that a book called *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism* will in fact be about Lawrence and women. After all, Lawrence, like Hardy, has always been associated with the representation of women, and has aroused a good deal of comment from feminist critics on these grounds. On the one hand, sexual radicals and celebrants of gender difference (Anais Nin, Carol Dick) have praised both the sexual explicitness and the stress upon a female nature or principle in his fiction, while critics in the "images of women" tradition (Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet) have memorably denounced the humiliation that some of his women characters undergo in the interests of "phallic consciousness". Both positions, clearly, rest upon an elision of Lawrence (man, husband of Frieda, holder of views) with the representations of gender difference and sexual relationship in his texts. And, indeed, for a feminist, this is part of the particular difficulty of reading Lawrence: the obscure centrality of the sexual theme in the later fiction at least, constantly invites dissolution of the texts back into the sexual pathology of the writer. Hilary Simpson suggests, in one of the most interesting comments in her book, that some of the later novels are structured and written like a role-reversed version of the polemical feminist novels of ideas of the turn of the century; perhaps it is the urgency of his pleading of the cause of masculinity that makes the kind of terms habitually used to denigrate such feminist writing — "shrill", "strident", "hysterical" — come so easily to mind.

Hilary Simpson, however, is not concerned with the general question of Lawrence and women, but addresses herself specifically to his knowledge of, and responses to, feminism in his own time. She proposes, and substantiates through a judicious mixture of biographical material and quotations from the writings, a view of Lawrence's attitude to feminism, as falling into distinct periods. An early, pre-war phase shows him in basic sympathy with what he conceived to be an essential feminine nature, primarily as a means of opposing the "masculine" world — commerce and mechanization. Influences upon this stage of his view, Simpson suggests, included the suffragist supporters he

knew personally (like Alice Del and Louie Burrows), as well as the image of the Pre-Raphaelite "dreaming woman" (though to assimilate him to the "New Woman" as she does seems me inaccurate). The gains made by women during the war, and consequently a greater involvement in public politics, increased presence in employment — made it apparent that feminism was developing in a direction that Lawrence did not approve, and, faced with the "New Feminism" and its commitment to political reform and welfare, he executed a violent about turn to become a staunch upholder of the "masculine principle" of unity and authority. Despite this reversal, he maintained throughout a polemic of masculine and feminine positions, and a deeply metaphysical resolution in which to shroud these concepts. Given that this vocabulary has so often been simply reproduced by critics, Simpson's calm and clear account of his ideas is very welcome.

More boldly, she also picks out certain elements in Lawrence's theory that can be said to relate to developments in modern, post-war, "oriented" feminism: in particular, an inherent and ongoing worked out independently of Freud, the privileged position accorded to phallus, and its contradistinction to the penis (as in Lacanian theory) and the value he places upon the functionalness of the female organs, prefiguring the currently fashionable concept of *jouissance*. Wisely, though, Simpson merely sketches these possible connections, and does not try to load upon them a theoretical weight that they will not bear.

However, D. H. Lawrence and *Feminism* seems rather slight, despite its wide-ranging research and its contextualization of Lawrence's views. Six of its seven chapters, moreover, extended, if interesting, into the last — a valuable examination of Lawrence's use of women's writing — like an appendix. What has been like an appendix, the book's interest of the sexual theme, which resides primarily in its early novels, is not important or enough in itself to sustain an argument at length, however much Lawrence may have liked to look upon himself as a social theorist or prophet. Simpson leans heavily upon the non-fictional writings — notably the *Study in Confession* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* — and uses the fiction mainly to illustrate points in her argument. It is disappointing that she did not go on to make fuller use of her clear and elegant account of the historical and ideological pressures upon Lawrence's sexual theory, by confronting the hazards and controversies of a reading of the texts themselves.

RHYNS ISAAC

The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790  
451pp. University of North Carolina Press. £20.65.  
0 8078 1489 X

This ambitious study demands attention from a much wider audience than its title would seem to suggest. It is one of those rare works of history that is as significant for its methodology as for its substantive findings, and will be of interest not just to students of colonial Anglo-America but also to those historians who are concerned with trying to recover the mentalities of societies in which the volume of literary production was low and there was comparatively little systematic record-keeping. Rhys Isaac has endeavoured both to enhance understanding about a significant area of eighteenth-century Anglo-America and, through the concepts and methods he employs, "to contribute a little to humanistic historical science".

Because it was the first successful English American colony, and because its inhabitants played such a conspicuous part in the American Revolution and the establishment of the American nation, colonial Virginia has always exercised a special fascination for historians. Especially over the past three decades, there has been an emphasis on the remarkable stability of its public life during the revolutionary era. The political system that produced George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, George Mason and James Madison, Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee, John Marshall and James Monroe, to name only the more prominent members of the Virginia political galaxy, was, historians have mostly agreed, both responsive to the needs of its constituents and, particularly in comparison with most other colonies at the time, extraordinarily free from serious internal conflict.

The conditions had not always been so. As has been made abundantly clear by several recent works on seventeenth-century Virginia and its newer Chesapeake neighbour, Maryland, depicting a society that was crude, uncivilized, permissive, and marked by conflict, these studies have pointedly called the questions of when and how the profoundly unstable world of seventeenth-century Virginia was transformed into the vastly more settled world of Washington's generation. But this major transformation is not the one alluded to in the title of Isaac's book, which focuses instead upon the alleged break-up of the ordered society of the mid-eighteenth century as a result of what Isaac refers to as a "double revolution" in religious and political thought and feeling. Concentrating on religious, social, and cultural life rather than on politics and considering all segments of society and not just the elite, Isaac offers a formidable challenge to the standard view of revolutionary Virginia as a society at peace with itself.

In order to provide the necessary background for this transformation, Isaac begins his book with a long, syncretic portrait of "traditional" ways of life in Virginia during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. His approach is largely derived from symbolic anthropology, and his characterization is both insightful and compelling. He analyses Virginia society in terms of its principal actors, its primary sites, its occasions for social action, and its "textures of community", describing an extensive, personal, and "rank-ordered" society arranged in a series of scattered and loose-knit communities. Although it was based upon this "personal" "texture of community", the society, Isaac argues, was organized largely around "the great cultural metaphor of patriarchy", and was dominated by hegemonic local elites, whose eminence depended not merely upon the great wealth and offices its members enjoyed but upon the number of their dependents — slaves, servants, family members, and people

of lesser wealth and status who accorded the gentry deference and services in return for patronage and credit.

The author describes how members of the gentry expressed their status and authority through their demeanour, mode of discourse, classical learning, refined style of living, personal independence, and new "great houses", the last functioning as centres for the display of the liberal hospitality only they could afford. They revealed their social authority through their dominance of the two most prominent public institutions, the county courts and parish churches, both of which served as inclusive ceremonial "centers for community assembly" and were contrived to offer a powerful representation of a structured, hierarchical community.

Based on economic competition and requiring substantial physical severity to police its expanding slave labour force, Virginian society contained considerable latent potential for violence. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, these underlying propensities had been largely channelled into a series of "contest pastimes" that provided much of the colony's social energy. In an intense jockeying for personal advantage and social recognition, free men of all classes danced, courted, drank, gambled, fought, and otherwise asserted their manly prowess, while the wealthy vied with one another in extravagant displays of magnificence and liberality. The outward self-abasement and exaggerated shows of submissiveness demanded from black slaves by whites and a growing communalism within the slave quarters contrasted sharply with the blatant assertions of self so prevalent among the free population.

The heart of the volume consists of six lively vignettes, each of which is intended to illustrate through a careful explication of a specific episode how developments in religion and politics brought conflict and change to the "traditional" order after 1760. Nominally inclusive, Virginia's Anglican establishment had already been weakened by serious internal squabbling between the laity and the clergy prior to the appearance of widespread organized dissent in the mid-1760s. Two decades earlier, Presbyterians, largely confined to a few localities, had assumed a posture of quiet accommodation towards the Anglican establishment. But the Separate Baptists, whose numbers increased rapidly after 1765, presented a much more militant challenge.

Standing for a pious, austere, and deeply emotional way of life that emphasized a "search for deep feeling" within a "close, supportive, and orderly community", they represented an aggressive "counter culture" that defined itself by its opposition to the formal distance and the worldly, extravagant, convivial orientation of the existing order. They sought neither control of the political system nor a "redistribution of worldly wealth". But, appealing primarily to less affluent segments of the population, they none the less managed, according to Isaac, to create "a cultural disjunction between the gentry and sections of the lower orders where hitherto there had been a continuum". At the same time, their "open rejection of deference" seemed to the gentry to be "highly subversive of established authority".

What made the Baptist challenge even more serious, Isaac contends, was its coincidence with the decade of bitter controversy between Britain and the colonies preceding the American Revolution, and Isaac explores this controversy in which Virginia took a prominent part, through an analysis of not of familiar political events but of religious spheres. Specifically, he uses these incidents to illustrate the gentry's ambivalence towards the growing previously almost sacrosanct connection with metropolitan Britain, an ambivalence in which the gentry were at once eager cultural provincials and increasingly wary of what they took to be the growing corruption of

metropolitan society. More and more, according to Isaac, the gentry felt trapped between the evident degeneracy of Britain and the ignorant enthusiasm of the evangelicals.

Isaac shows how Virginia's traditional leaders deftly used the controversy with Britain to resolve this dilemma. Taking the lead in the resistance to Britain, they equated the self-denial and communal solidarity required with opposition to corruption in general. They thus placed themselves at the forefront of those who, like the evangelicals, advocated "a world reshaped in truly moral order" and thereby managed to revive "the spirit of the traditional deferential order".

But this revival, Isaac maintains in a brief conclusion, was only momentary. The old order had already been too thoroughly undermined by what he refers to as a "radical individualization", epitomized by the evangelical stress upon personal conversion. According to Isaac, this development was also apparent during the last decades of the eighteenth century in a growing "privatization" of household living arrangements, a palpable separation of family from community, and a manifest decay in the social idealization of the metaphor of patriarchy in favour of the metaphor of money, now in association with a "greatly enhanced metaphor of the self-sustaining individual". It was further evident in the only "great institutional transformation" that accompanied Virginia's transition to independence: the total separation of church and state provided by the 1784 "Act for Establishing Freedom of Religion" was "utterly without precedent in the Atlantic world".

Notwithstanding its power and subtlety, this imaginative reading of Virginia's revolutionary experience is not without problems. Perhaps most serious, the characterization of Virginia's "traditional" order seems to have been constructed largely for the purpose of providing the author with a stable backdrop against which to assess the impact of the religious and social developments in which he is primarily interested. As a result, it tends both to overestimate the coherence and rigidity of that order and to underestimate its fluidity and receptivity to change. Thus, although Isaac points out that the old order was still relatively new and "gentry dominance . . . hardly consolidated" by 1750, he nevertheless presents that order as far more coercive and deeply entrenched and its gentry leaders as far more thoroughly committed to the status quo and more monolithic in outlook than they probably were. The gentry's social authority was almost certainly stronger in Virginia than in any of the other new English societies in America. Even in Virginia, however, aspirations for the patriarchy, authority, patronage, and deference enjoyed by the English gentry seem to have remained, to an important degree, unfulfilled, and the predominance of the elite probably far less upon the sort of coercive hegemony depicted by Isaac than upon their own acute awareness that to retain power they could not violate the interests of the lower orders of free people, whose tacit consent had always been essential to gentry authority everywhere in early modern Anglo-America.

Certainly, it seems unlikely that gentry aspirations for patriarchy ever predominated over the concern for money that had been so conspicuously evident in Virginia from its first founding. As Virginia's leaders had increasingly disavoured to reshape the colony into something resembling English rural society after 1690, such aspirations were indeed widely evident. No less than their contemporary British counterparts, however, the Virginia gentry were always alive to new economic opportunities — whether in land development, new crops, or iron production — with the result that Virginia, rapidly expanding in settled territory, population, and economic production throughout the eighteenth century, never seems to have settled into the kind of

"traditional" socio-economic stasis in which their aspirations for patriarchy could flourish. Nor was the Anglican gentry by any means so united in its defence of an extravagant style of living against its evangelical critics as Isaac suggests. Indeed, more and more after 1740, a concern with proliferating luxury and immorality extended far beyond dissenters to include what appears to have been a large majority of the most visible and politically powerful members of the gentry. Even without the evangelical challenge, these men would have welcomed the opportunity presented by the imperial controversy to try to recover Virginia's lost virtue.

Similarly, Isaac appears to overstate the strength of the Anglican religious establishment, whose influence, never very deep in this highly secular society, seems to have depended heavily upon its toleration of a wide diversity of religious orientations and its compatibility with the loose and permissive character of Virginian life. The Baptists appealed strongly to those many people who did not find this establishment spiritually satisfying. But they never constituted more than a small fraction — Isaac says 10 per cent — of the population during the colonial period. Reaffirming the society's long-standing cultural preference for a more relaxed mode of religious life, the vast majority of Virginians remained, at least in the short run, either nominally Anglican or blissfully attached to no denomination.

If, in these ways, Isaac has exaggerated the coherence of the old order, he has probably also given insufficient attention to the continuities between the old order and the new. From a perspective stressing the underlying fluidity and dynamism of the old order, the decision to separate church and state does not seem all that revolutionary; it looks, rather, like yet another display of the gentry's awareness of the extent to which its authority depended upon a broad, specifically constitutional, capacity to adjust to social conditions. As earlier historians have argued, this remarkable flexibility was an important reason why the Revolution did not produce more radical social results in Virginia and why, arguably, the elite emerged from the Revolution stronger than it had ever been before.

It can also be contended that in the wake of the Revolution the new emphasis upon the metaphor of the self-sustaining individual was less an expression of declining interest in community than a rationalization which extended social approbation to modes of individualistic behaviour prevalent in Virginia from its first establishment. Similarly, at the same time that it undermined the older — and probably never very strong — forms of communal unity, the new religious order, with the evangelicals' stress upon the fraternity of true believers, may even have enhanced community in Virginia by reorganizing it along denominational lines. Along with the slowing pace of territorial, demographic, and economic growth, these developments actually appear to have left the gentry in a position from which, during the first half of the nineteenth century, they could regard with pride not the "modernization" of Virginia but a greater "traditionalization" than their ancestors had managed to achieve during the colonial period.

Although Virginia's late eighteenth-century history is susceptible of alternative readings, Isaac's engaging and intelligent account is certainly the most powerful and sophisticated interpretation now available. One of the best — and most provocative — books written on colonial Anglo-America over the past decade, it must be the starting-point for all further work on the subject. Equally important, his efforts to demonstrate how historians can profitably employ some of the tools of symbolic anthropology in a concluding section, deserve close inspection. By both broadening and deepening the range of inquiry, Isaac's approach promises considerable enrichment to the rapidly developing field of social history.

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## Under manipulation

Tracey Warr

GILLIAN E. HANSCOMBE

The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness  
200pp. Peter Owen. £12.  
0 7206 0580 6

Dorothy Richardson's gravestone accidentally concealed her art and her life by giving her middle name as Miriam instead of Miller — Miriam Henderson being the heroine of her long autobiographical novel, *Pilgrimage*. In *The Art of Life* Gillian Hanscombe is concerned with what she sees as Richardson's deliberate merging of the two. She argues that Richardson's work is not only significant for its technical innovation — *Pointed Roofs* (1915), the first of the thirteen volumes of *Pilgrimage*, was the earliest "stream-of-consciousness" novel in English — "but also for its challenge to the traditionally defined divisions between art and life".

Like most of us Richardson was capable of applying fiction to life on a small scale — she lied about her age when she married a man fifteen years younger than herself, for example. But, more seriously, Hanscombe attempts to demonstrate that "Richardson affirms . . . the supreme validity of her own consciousness as an index of reality, by the manipulation of living people as her material". She sees such a manipulation in the fact that Richardson appears to have persuaded two people who were in love with her to marry each other, and thus allow her to escape from their emotional demands. This incident is represented in the central volumes of *Pilgrimage* where Miriam feels increasingly pressurized by her relationships with Michael Shatov whose proposal she has guiltily refused, with Anabel, and with Hypo G. Wilson. (Wilson is based on H. O. Wells with whom Richardson had an affair — Miriam suggests that his

initial "G" stands for God.) Miriam plans to marry Michael and Anabel off to each other, in a way which, Hanscombe writes, "is very like the conception of a work of art, carrying within it . . . the confidence of manipulative power". Her plan is successful, and her affair with Hypo ends after her belief that she is pregnant turns out to be unfounded. Hanscombe draws on the evidence of Veronica Leslie-Jones — the real-life Anabel — to show that Richardson had indeed manipulated Veronica and Benjamin Gird (Michael) as she described in *Pilgrimage* (her letters are printed in an Appendix).

Hanscombe convincingly argues that women may need something different from the traditional genres to express their experience. The use of hybrid forms by a number of contemporary women writers supports this idea. But the overlap of art and life which she has located in Richardson's experience and work does not constructively elucidate this issue, and in fact highlights one of the weaknesses of *Pilgrimage*.

Richardson began writing the novel in 1912 and continued for the rest of her life. The volumes appeared regularly at first but she seems to have become increasingly insecure about the project and the later volumes show signs of this strain. Hanscombe's argument leads her to concentrate on the tenth volume, *Dawn's Left Hand*, in which Richardson's writing is often not at its best.

*Pilgrimage* presents Miriam's escape from involvement with Hypo; Anabel and Michael as being wholly successful, and concludes with Miriam holding Anabel's and Michael's baby son. Her "manipulation" has allowed her to experience motherhood vicariously and to achieve an oblique and impersonal consummation of her relationships with Anabel and Michael. In reality, however, Richardson was not able to resolve the situation so satisfactorily. Verone and Benjamin's marriage ended in divorce and Richardson's affair with

Wells broke up after a miscarriage. Richardson's biographer, Gloria Gilkin Fromm, suggests that the affair and the disengagement from Wells — who was married to an old school friend of Richardson — were much more traumatic than the fictional affair between Miriam and Hypo.

Veronica's verdict is that "We all make pictures of ourselves . . . but most of us I think in time, anyway in bits, see through our self-deception . . . [In *Pilgrimage*] Everyone is neatly labelled and there we stayed. We might grow and change and develop — but it didn't fit into Dorothy's picture and wasn't so". But this isn't true of *Pilgrimage* as a whole. Hanscombe's thesis only pinpoints a part of the novel where Richardson was using art to improve her experience in retrospect.

Hanscombe takes the title for her first chapter from Virginia Woolf's statement that Richardson had invented a "woman's sentence". The radical implications of this phrase are dissipated by its context:

She has invented . . . a sentence . . . of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes . . . It is a woman's sentence, but only in the sense that it is used to describe a woman's mind.

Yet despite this, Hanscombe only discusses the tactics and merits of Richardson's style in this chapter, rather than the question of whether it is somehow distinctly a woman's style.

The densely written introduction raises important questions such as "to what extent can we measure [an experimental work like *Pilgrimage*] according to traditional critical criteria?" and "Is a woman's book different from a man's book?" She conducts an intelligent, detailed study of Richardson but her book seems distorted by her argument concerning the development of Feminist Consciousness.



# Let there be cuteness

Nick Roddick

ADRIAN BAILEY  
Wall Disney's World of Fantasy  
253pp. Limsfield: Dragon's World.  
£12.95.  
0 905895 60 6

FRANK THOMAS and OLLIE JOHNSTON

Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life  
575pp. Abbeville/Orbis. £35.  
0 89659 232 4

All Hollywood moguls had a marked tendency to see themselves as God. Harry Cohn at Columbia spied on his creation through hidden microphones, and MGM, with its slogan of "More stars than there are in the heavens", clearly aspired to something more than a mere copy of the firmament. But nowhere was the aspiration to divinity more evident than at Disney. In the early days, the creation of a self-contained universe was fairly simple, since Disney's world contained no human beings, only the creatures in its maker's imagination. After a false start with an *Alice in Wonderland* cartoon in the 1920s, the small-town boy from Kansas assembled his first true Eden in 1928, peopled largely by mice. To them were added a duck-voiced hound in 1932 and a bad-tempered duck in 1934. In this cosy little Eden, governed by gods, with little sign of serpents, Disney's efforts were devoted to capturing "the illusion of life", but by that he meant movement, not reality.

Five years later, he was ready to tackle real wickedness, not just those cheerful little surrogates, nightgowns and crinoline (a quintessential American characteristic), which were the domain of mice and duck. In a world ruled by benevolent magic, the evil Queen in *Snow White* and the villainous Stromboli in *Pinocchio* (1940) nevertheless presented some kind of threat to the colourful paradise in which the Disney creatures gambolled. With *Fantasia* (1940), evil itself made an appearance. In retrospect, it was a significant moment. On paper, *Fantasia* (though less probably, because it personified evil than because it strayed far outside the world to which Disney's customers had grown accustomed). And shortly afterwards came the first real trouble in paradise: the studio strike of 1942.

The 1940s appear to have been a time when Disney began to look for new ideas. None of the major animated features of the 1940s quite captured the commercial and critical success of *Snow White*, and the next two decades were spent designing different Edens, starting with the "True-Life Adventures". In which animals were anthropomorphized and humans were stripped of all their problems. Finally, coming rather late to the real business of making a world in his own image, Disney's attentions turned to his masterpiece, Disneyland - "the happiest place on earth", where dreams and nightmares are reduced to manageable proportions, history is homogenized and, if you drop your candy wrapper, it will be picked up in under two minutes.

Disney's control of his world extended to his history and almost nothing derogatory of any length ever gets published because the company insists on seeing all copy before it will release illustrations. In 1968, when Richard Schickel produced his generally affectionate but occasionally critical history, *The Disney Version*, he was forbidden to use so much as the famous signature on the dust jacket - let alone illustrations. And immediately after the book's publication, the Disney organization marshalled any number of its stars to tell interviewers just how Schickel had misrepresented a sweet, kind and - the ultimate crunch - recently deceased person. Since Schickel, no one has tried to do it again.

The two most recent books on Disney are well within the confines of the authorized version: indeed, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston's *Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life* is the nearest the organization has yet come



Interpreting the image: a poster by Reginald Mount for the 1955 Ealing Studios comedy 'The Ladykillers', one of the examples included in Projecting Britain: Ealing Studios Film Posters (67pp. BFI Publishing, £7.95, 0 85170 122 1). Edward Bawden, James Flinn, Barnett Freedman, John Minton, and John Piper were among the established painters to produce work for the studio.

made sure that there was. Disney himself, Schickel revealed, could not even draw Mickey or execute the famous signature (something which caused him frequent embarrassment with autograph hunters). But he was, at least according to the author, an unlikely to be equalled, but for a coffee-table book, a "show-a-do" book, studio sponsored and produced over a four-year period. Thomas and Johnston are determined to share their erudition but too often we follow them through painstaking descriptions of technical processes that leave us little wiser, and we are treated to a self-taught aesthetic in which notions such as character and character relationship are presented as though they were exciting discoveries made only at Disney.

What is interesting about Bailey's book is that it is the first studio-sponsored history to admit that there might have been flaws in the Disney firmament - before, of course, dismissing them with the same cavalier insouciance that denies the evilness of all Disney villains, from the Queen in *Snow White* to Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book*. In *Bambi*, Bailey admits, "the baby animals are overloaded with sentimentality; yet I judge their aim to be true: when as a child I first saw the film, I responded to the sentiment and the coziness of it all. Today, I am embarrassed by the sentiment but awed by the mastery of the presentation." Never mind the quality, feel the width.

The true stamp of the authorized version as updated, however, is to be found in Bailey's treatment of the 1942 strike which destroyed for ever the cosy working atmosphere of the old Hyperion Avenue studio as described in the Thomas/Johnston book ("When it came right down to it, most of us were more interested in keeping animation alive than we were in making money.") The strike was over unionization - a topic that was anathema to a man who was prepared to pay more money to a private company to do his work than to use electricity rather than use the Anaheim city power company. Bailey admits that there was a strike, but gives minimal details. Then, with no hint of a non sequitur, he launches into the following:

Walt Disney's dedication to his work, on the other hand, continued to be entirely selfless. He became known as "the hardest worker in Hollywood". His ceaseless drive took him to the studio at dawn. It is not generally known that each Christmas, Disney entertained children at the hospital

# Bring on the cavalry

Kevin Brownlow

DAN FORD  
The Unquiet Man: The Life of John Ford  
324pp. William Kimber. £11.50.  
0 7183 0059 9

John Ford is revered by cineastes. They regard him as an irascible but lovable Irishman, far too intelligent for Hollywood, who made the greatest pictures ever to come out of America. That's the accepted legend, and if anyone fostered legends, it was John Ford.

Dan Ford, his grandson, has interviewed his co-workers, and assembled his personal and professional papers, and in *The Unquiet Man* he makes a valiant effort to separate the myth from the man. Some of the light he casts on Ford is considerably less than flattering. Yet a curious thing happens. Far from destroying the myth he creates a picture of a man even more remarkable than the legends suggest:

He was a great film-maker, a consummate craftsman, but he also had a notion of himself as a man of action, a Byronic figure, that accounts for his lifelong fascination with the military. He served with great distinction in World War II and was eventually awarded an Admiral's star. After the war he became obsessed with the American military tradition, and in the minds of his liberal critics he became the American Kipling.

"Kipling" as misleading an accolade as "Byronic" as Don Ford is quick to point out, suggesting that the true American Kipling was James Warner Bellah, the author of Ford's famous cavalry trilogy. Ford was compared to Kipling because of his love for old-fashioned virtues, his admiration for the military, and, to be blunt, his jingoism.

*The Unquiet Man* reveals Ford to be a much more confused character, with the dished conservative pitched against the social rebel. One image stands out - the old man, ignoring personal hygiene, his beard, hair and fingernails growing long, while rows of neatly pressed naval uniforms hang in his closet. But the seamy side of Ford's life was not exclusive to his old age. In the 1920s everyone defied prohibition, but there can't have been many who would build one room to house his books, another, with secret compartments, to hide his liquor. One's illusions may be further shaken by revelations about Ford's treatment of actors, some of whom were his friends. He was one of the few directors who lacked theatrical training, and perhaps he felt insecure, confronted by skilled actors. Yet he had an intuitive and uncanny appreciation of acting. While he was unable to articulate it, he could goad actors into excelling themselves by a combination of sarcastic humour and outright bullying.

He behaved like a character out of one of his cavalry films - a bull-headed, bad-tempered Irish sergeant, who inspired loyalty and even love from his troops (though one wonders why as one reads story after story proving how impossible he was). Dan Ford includes in his book an extraordinary interview with Harry Carey Jr, the son of the man who helped start Ford's career, which reveals his methods with actors:

John Ford was a born psychologist. He could manipulate actors better than any other director I ever worked for. If you were doing a tender love scene, he was just marvellous to you; he treated you with loving care, and you wanted to kiss him after every shot. But if it was a scene that had violence in it, or anything to do with your coming apart emotionally, he was just the opposite. He'd start digging and picking on you the moment you walked on the set.

From the evidence of this book, I suspect that one person who didn't like John Ford very much was Ford himself. He was certainly a hard man to pin down. Peter Bogdanovich made a film about him, for which he took the old man to Monument Valley. But

when he asked a question about how he did a certain shot in *Stagecoach*, Ford snarled "swell a camera". Dan Ford made a very similar film, and also took the old man to Monument Valley. This time, Ford, working with his family, was on his best behaviour, told marvellous stories and was charming.

I was not so fortunate. I encountered him once at an Academy function in Hollywood in the late 1960s. Tall and powerfully built, he stared at the world with a baleful expression in his one good eye (the other had an eyepatch). His expression suggested that of an alcoholic offered water. I tried to start him talking about his early pictures, but each question received a "Don't remember". I felt as if I were challenging him with war crimes. I knew what would start him talking and introduced him to my wife, red-head and Irish. At once, he began rhapsodizing about County Wexford and the footbridge over the Blackwater.

But these pictures appeared strongly to the émigré Irish - they corresponded to their romantic memories - or to the Irish at one remove, which was what Ford was. Born John Feeney in Maine in 1895, he was the son of an immigrant saloon-keeper. His older brother, Francis, disappeared from home to turn up, years later, as a great motion picture actor and director. He had altered his name to one that Americans would respect; Ford, as is Henry. John took the same name and the same career, and followed his brother to Hollywood in 1914.

This period of Ford's career is virtually unknown, and little light is cast upon it here. The silent era is the book's weakest section with names misspelled and events misrepresented. This is a great pity, for Ford regarded himself as a "man of the silent cinema". He made over fifty silent pictures and an Irish connection was apparent in many of them - *Hungry for Love*, *Shamrock Handicap*, *Riley the Cop*.

One may wonder why Ford made so much fuss about his Irish origins. Hollywood was so heavily populated with people of Irish origin that you could make a crude generalization and say that if the Jews ran the business side, the Irish made the pictures. Being Irish in the America of those days was about as glamorous as being Hispanic in the modern New York. John Ford did the unfashionable thing in boasting of his Irish roots. Dan Ford relates that his wife, Mary, took a dim view of his film-making, which she regarded as "low Irish" and demanded that he put an activity which would place him above his Hollywood colleagues. The he says, is one reason why Ford became a Navy reservist.

Another is apparent throughout the book - that Ford remained an overgrown adolescent all his life. He loved joining things, but had a contempt for the establishment. Noticing country clubs excluded him, and his cronies formed a sham club, with a black man as President and the slogan "Jews but no dogs". It was an excuse for Ford to drink and to escape. Ford longed to live like legends he had created about himself, and when he formed the Emerald Bay yacht club, he cruised around the Mexican coast, photographing Japanese fishing vessels and invading a dangerous spy ring for the American Naval intelligence. But his fantasy came true. When war began, he formed an outfit called the Hollywood Photographic Unit, an excuse to have fun in uniform. It was taken over by the Navy, and then by the OSS, and Ford realized his greatest ambition - to experience the kind of adventure he had created for the screen. He was had created for the screen; he was bombed and strafed at Midway, kept his camera running, and produced *Battle of Midway*, which eventually won an Oscar. He was involved in the Normandy landings and in the Invasion of Europe and he remained a civilian life with the rank of captain.

When you add to that the best of his films - *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Fort Sons*, *Stagecoach* - you begin to realize the scale of his achievement. Ford has written a fascinating book, and if some of the stories are apocryphal, it is nonetheless a valuable one. It serves as a valuable oral history by John Ford's family who, despite everything, still

# Man, and other animals

Andrew Topsfield

Indian Drawings  
Hayward Gallery

It was feared by some that last year's unprecedented glut of Indian exhibitions might bring an apathetic reaction once the Festival of India was over, and it is reassuring that the Arts Council have now organized this enjoyable show. The first of its kind to be held in this country, it has been selected by the artist Howard Hodgkin, himself a collector of Indian pictures. This is probably the best qualification for such a task, for although some museums have collected a fair number of Indian drawings - Hodgkin under-estimates their holdings in the introduction to his catalogue (Arts Council, £3.95, 0 7287 030 5) - as a distinct class of picture they have been appreciated more by the individual enthusiast. The only two serious studies of the subject hitherto were both written by scholars: A. K. Coomaraswamy's *Indian drawings* (1910-12), the first book ever published on India's graphic arts, and S. C. Welch's more recent exhibition catalogue, *Indian drawings and painted sketches* (1976).

This apparent neglect results partly from the uncertainty of distinction between paintings and drawings in India. Both normally use the same technique: fine brushes, opaque water-colour and a paper support. Most Indian paintings rely for their expressiveness as much on taut, rhythmic clarity of outline drawing as on their controlled intensity of colouring, and in this sense could be called coloured drawings. What then is a drawing? For this exhibition it has been understood, on the whole, as anything less than a fully coloured painting. Four main types emerge, two of which are reasonable enough artists' working sketches and unfinished paintings in which only the preparatory under-drawing is complete. The other two more ambiguous, types comprise highly finished grisaille works, sometimes lightly tinted, and otherwise finished paintings of certain schools, in which, for prevailing reasons of taste, large background areas were left untouched. Seen together here, these different types of work provide a wide and satisfying anthology of the linear experiments and achievements of Indian painters, although individually none of them has survived in great numbers. The two more finished types were always specialized genres, in most



"The Emperor Akbar the Great hunting from a howdah on the back of an elephant", a seventeenth-century work of the Delhi school, from the exhibition reviewed here.

# February Books from Yale

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This is a comprehensive historical survey of Japan's economic performance from the Meiji Restoration to the beginning of the Pacific War. £27.50

# commentary

# Mid-life crises

Richard Combs

Tempest  
Various cinemas

Restlessness, urban angst, women's liberation, male menopause - from *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* to *An Unmarried Woman*, Paul Mazursky's bantering comedies have clocked up more than their share of contemporary discontents. And, in the process, Mazursky himself now seems to have been overtaken by a mid-life crisis, by a need to try out other forms than hip New York comedy. This may be a kind of insecurity peculiar to New York film-makers, since Mazursky follows Woody Allen in this cultural quest. But Allen at least was lucky in finding Ingmar Bergman fairly early in his career, where one suspects that Mazursky has not yet found his model. His previous film, *Willie & Phil*, modelled itself after *Jules et Jim*, and now he has made even freer with Shakespeare. The result, however, is surprising in two ways, both related to its wayward length of nearly two-and-a-half hours. It is more ambitious than one might have expected - not in terms of Shakespearean interpretation, but in the tenacity with which it worries at its characters who have become "stuck" in life - and more enjoyable in its show-business indulgence.

At first, *The Tempest* seems a rather arbitrary, and even inappropriate, vehicle for a story about a disillusioned New York architect, Philip Dinitarius (John Cassavetes), "the king of high tech", as he sarcastically terms himself, who simply acts on that contemporary longing to get away from it all. Nothing here of Shakespeare drawing up the balance-sheet of his art (Philip, we are led to understand, is a good architect who has lost interest in building casinos for the Mob), or of the self-consciousness that comes from both the withering of age and a complementary clarity of vision. But in his updating of the text, Mazursky goes even further than turning it into a contemporary crisis-of-success fable, and in going further has come up with some show business that is not alien to Shakespeare. There are a number of unexpected, and delightful, song and dance routines on this faraway isle, and Prospero has become an entertainer in a rather John Osborne mood.

The particular coup of this interpretation is the casting of Cassavetes - an actor of Greek origin, and a film-maker whose own work (*Shadows*, *Husbands*, *Opening Night*) has concerned itself, Prospero-like, with the "reality" of acting, with the

stuff that dream and illusion are made of. The subject, beneath the Shakespearean text, and beneath some of Mazursky's more familiar flummery about the comic dishonesties of sex, is something that underpins most of Cassavetes' films - the traps and snares of being emotionally honest with oneself and others. It is a theme which explains why the first half of the film, with its extended flashbacks illustrating Philip's super-chic life in Manhattan, seems so wrongfooted, with its pretentious intimations of a moral crisis (Philip watching his disembodied self falling from the top of his latest casino in construction).

Once he has settled in his barren place, however, Philip hardly bothers explaining himself to anyone - the first authentic sign of his search for authenticity - certainly not to the women, his daughter Miranda (Molly Ringwald) and casual pick-up Arella (Susan Sarandon), who have chosen to share his exile. The other side-effect of the Cassavetes persona is that this Prospero remains unashamedly "difficult" - tetchy, uncommunicative, belligerent even, an egotist like Shakespeare's original looking for a way out of his ego - where Mazursky's previous heroes - have usually capitulated to the demand to charm. The film's other advantages might be similarly phrased in negative terms: its failure to turn Philip's Greek island into a tourist landscape; its failure to allow the narrative to come to rest, with the flashbacks to New York and the account of Philip's journey first to Athens and then to his island emphasizing uncertainty and displacement, travelling over arriving.

It's a structure which also allows the women to come into their own. Both Mazursky's Ariel (Sarandon) and Miranda establish themselves spiritedly in the space that has been vacated by the "magician" in their lives. Philip's "high tech" is a far cry from the "low tech" of his daughter's and father. Only Mazursky's need to round this dream with a return to Manhattan, a return to cultural certainties, recalls the glibness of his other films. The need for New York is evidently so strong among its native film-makers (vide Woody Allen) that it amounts to a kind of blinkered vision. Ironically, it is the "nowhere" land of Los Angeles and Hollywood (an area certainly despised by this East Coast fraternity) that has produced work - John Ford's film *7 Women*, for instance - that is closest to the artistic vision of the Shakespearean *Tempest*.

*Shakespeare in Perspective* prints the commentaries on the first eleven BBC Shakespeare productions (279pp. BBC, £3.95, 0 563 16505 7).

# Trials of Desire

Renaissance Defenses of Poetry  
Margaret W. Ferguson

Defining and illuminating the defense of poetry as a rhetorical genre in its own right and drawing on Freud's theories about psychic defense mechanisms, this study brings into focus exemplary works by Du Bellay, Tasso, and Sidney, authors who experimented with the genre in particularly significant ways. £18.50

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## Alexander Solzhenitsyn

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Both these plays were conceived by the author in the years 1961-3 when he was under sentence of hard labour in the Gulag. He committed them to memory and wrote them down subsequent to his release. They form two parts of a trilogy, the last part being *The Love Girl and the Innocent*, which was published in 1969 and was later performed on BBC television and by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

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Guardian

'As a study of circumstantial evidence and disintegration, it is quite brilliant, quite heartless.'

Observer

John Hutton's first novel, 29 Herriot Street, was short-listed for the 1980 Arts Council National Book Awards. It has just been published in paperback by Granada.

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# BODLEY HEAD

## commentary



'God the Father and an angel', (1646), a drawing by Guercino included in the exhibition of Italian Drawings from the Luigi Collection, Institute Néerlandais, Paris, on show at the British Museum until May 15.

## Monologues and miracles

Clive Sinclair

MARTIN SHERMAN  
Messiah  
Aldwych Theatre

'No chapter in the history of the Jewish people during the last several hundred years has been as shrouded in mystery as that of the Sabbatian movement', wrote Gershom Scholem in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. Perhaps that is why the story of Sabbatai Sevi has attracted so many writers; lacking Scholem's scholarly constraints they can replace historical reconstruction with imaginative speculation. In brief, Sabbatai Sevi lived from 1626 until 1676. He was born in Smyrna and spent his early career as a peripatetic rabbi, something of a holy sinner, tottering between states of ecstasy and melancholy. His obscurity ended when he fell in with a prophet called Nathan of Gaza. There, in 1665, with Nathan's blessing, he declared himself the Messiah. The rest is history—or fiction.

Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Satan in Gorys* is a paradoxical warning against the removal of the restraints between imagination and action, exemplified in the novel by corrupt kabbalists who take sexual metaphors literally, a sin Singer himself committed in writing the novel. Rechele, his heroine, having conceived the Messiah in her mind, is possessed by a dybbuk and dies in a grotesque parody of childbirth. In Barnett Litvinoff's *Another Time, Another Voice* Sabbatai Sevi was a hippie-like mystic, misguided by unscrupulous managers; despite the title the message was contemporary (circa 1971). Now Martin Sherman, provoked by the Jonestown massacre, has also been drawn to the mystery of the Sabbatian movement. Like Singer he sets his drama in a Polish shtetl or Jewish village, all of which were susceptible to messianic rumours after the pogroms of 1648. Sherman's subject is not Sevi's motivation but his effect upon a small community; in particular, on a buck-toothed matron, her dumbfound mother, her husband and her nephew-by-marriage.

Maureen Lipman plays Rachel, a rationalist variant of Singer's famous schlemiel. While Gimpel the Fool is ready to take people at their word when they tell him that the Messiah has come to Prampol, Rachel requires proof, and asks God for a sign. She is on familiar terms with the Almighty, though her conversations are one-sided—in other words, she delivers many monologues. Indeed, monologues make up a great part of the play. This is fine when they're Rachel's because, as someone complains, she's always got a smart answer. Otherwise the monologues are

gnomic wisdom; the former speeches tend to be plodders, the latter outright sorcery.

Essentially Sherman has written a love story distinguished by an unusual plot, which goes something like this. The ugly Rachel marries an older man, Reb Ellis, to escape the curse of spinsterhood, acquiring also a beautiful nephew. On their wedding day this nephew, Asher, bursts in with news that the Messiah has come. In time even Reb Ellis is converted, so that he disposes of all his worldly goods and climbs onto his roof from which he intends to fly to Jerusalem. At first Rachel pleads with him to come down, until it occurs to her that his flight might be the sign she requires, so she yells 'Jump!' He crashes, leaving Rachel a widow. Asher decides to go to Constantinople to see the Messiah, and Rachel is persuaded to accompany him by the miracle of her mother, the hitherto speechless Rebecca, shouting 'Sabbatai!' In Constantinople Rachel and Asher make love because Sabbatai has announced that everything once forbidden is now permitted.

So long as the story of Sabbatai Sevi is an integral part of the plot (as it is in the above events) the play holds together. It falls apart because in Act Two Shlirin Taylor (playing Sarah, Sabbatai's wife) has to recite an interminable monologue which has the effect of deadening Rebecca's only speech, which is neither dramatic nor moving, though it records the events that caused her to bite her tongue. What should be the intellectual core of the play—the denunciation of a cosmic God in favour of a humanistic Messiah—consequently suffers the same fate as earthbound Reb Ellis. Furthermore, a fascinating contradiction gets lost; Sabbatai, the false Messiah, grants Rachel her only happiness, but at the expense of her intelligence (not to mention Reb Ellis's life).

Not that Lipman's performance is anything but intelligent, thanks to the fine lines Sherman has provided for her. The other actors are less well-served. Jack Klaff (who plays Asher) suffers from a lack of contemporary significance upon the play. Although a religious zealot he is required to speak of his former 'spiritual oppression', an idea that would never have crossed his mind. Worse, this humourous character is given the lines, 'The problem is so many people are beating themselves with nettles that there are no nettles left.' It is meant to be a self-mocking joke, and it is witty, but it has nothing to do with reality. Has Sherman never tried to clear nettles from a garden? They are perpetual.

This is symptomatic of a play that fails to turn imagination into action. It depends upon language for its effect, but at the crucial moments the language disconnects.

## Sparring partnerings

Peter Kemp

The Captain's Doll  
BBC 2

During his stay in Taos, New Mexico, D. H. Lawrence was given a surprise. His hostess there, Mabel Lahan, one day presented herself to him kitted out in clothes—white stockings, long full skirts—like those his mother used to wear. She had resolved, she later confided in her memoirs, to play her part in satisfying what she saw as a 'need of his to be entirely surrounded by all sorts and sizes of persons dressed like his mother'. For Lawrence, though, Mabel's attempt to extend a helping hand to his Oedipus complex must have seemed the materialization of a nightmare. Women, he always fears, may want to treat their men as a 'need of his to be entirely surrounded by all sorts and sizes of persons dressed like his mother'. His writing shows him using many twists and squirms to struggle free of such a suffocating clutch. And nowhere more so than in *The Captain's Doll*. Its central image—a doll-like effigy of the male—embodies his apprehensions of what women might like their men to be: diminished, passive, hugged, manipulated. Its central doctrine—that wives should offer 'Honour and obedience: and the proper physical feelings'—is one of his charms to keep vampire 'love' at bay.

James Saunders's adaptation of the tale slightly shifted its emphasis. Interpolated scenes threw greater weight onto its satiric look at shallow, casual sex. As a result, the basic contrast seemed to be not between a cloyingly intimate relationship and something less stifling, but between easy, temporary partnerings and one that is more demanding but more permanent. There were other alterations. The Melodrama was introduced, with some spurious scenes of suspense when Hepburn fears Hannele may have died, and suggestions that his wife could have committed suicide. Apart from this, however, the film did splendid justice to the novella. Largely, this was due to first-rate acting. Jeremy Irons not only looked exactly right as Hepburn, he also managed to empathize convincingly with the man's personality and all its awkward shifts between diffidence and dogmatism.

## Flats and sharps

Andrew Hislop

DOUG LUCIE  
Hard Feelings  
Bush Theatre

That a play set in Brixton explores the politics of power and property and the struggle in a community for individual rights and justice is no great surprise; that there are riots in the streets during it is predictable. Even the outbreak of disease at the end seems a natural consequence of the quality of the characters' lives. Doug Lucie's *Hard Feelings*, however, never leaves the confines of a poor (ish) rich (ish) girl's flat; its political and moral issues are centred on the power games and sexual intrigues of a community of pad-sharing graduates (riots and blacks are kept firmly off-stage); and the spreading disease, though quintessentially social, is classlessly venerable.

A link, though, between the external boomer and the internal botheration is provided by Tone (Stephen Tiller). A working-class, left-wing journalist and committed boyfriend of would-be solicitor Jane (Jennifer Landor), the latest he swaps projectiles with the police outside, and abuse, blows and sections of the Sunday papers with various members of the household indoors. Such versatility takes its physical toll. He is cut above an eye by

Gila von Weitershausen, a witty, sarcastic Hannele, was captivated by a woman who is captivated. And though Jane Lapotaire was, strictly, too tall for Hepburn's wife—one of the story's ironies is that the woman who makes a doll of her husband is herself doll-like—she was perfect in every other way. The predatory prattle and the rattling one-jewelled possessiveness were portrayed with polished comic veneer, the fey egotism and peaky aggression beautifully caught.

Opening with the sight of a medical soldier, the film stressed the *guerre* aspects of *The Captain's Doll*. Tommies tramped triumphantly on the cobbles of Cologne. Demoralized Germans and Austrians behaved with embittered frivolity. Returned to England after his wife's death, Hepburn finds himself doubly demotivated: discharged from his role as soldier and as husband. Extending the story's summary here, the film enlarged entertainingly on its disorientation in a world of cocksh, ragtime from horned gramophones, and shingled flappers semaphoring their availability. This way of it, captured in a superbly satiric scene, was finally set against something more elemental. Rejoining Hannele in Austria, Hepburn persuades her to visit a glacier with him. In the story this is presented in emphatically erotic terms: the vista includes a 'def... with black trees like hair flourishing in this secret, naked place of the earth'. Skirting such sexual scenery, the film confined itself to the psychological and emotional sparring between the couple. As Hannele and Hepburn scrambled their ungainly, persistent way over the rough ground, doing as it were, Hepburn's face was an eloquent study of his inner state. He was indignantly down to earth. His rapture was doubly guarded.

Climbers greeting each other with cries of 'Bergheil!' were mocked. And, with this, Hepburn's attitude in the background, introduced, was a clue to his passing itself off as ecstasy. Even his rivetingly intelligent performance put in by the two protagonists, the piece of special pleading; Hannele, the Hepburn's wife, may have made a puppet of him, but he now seems a stringer of her along. It's hard to imagine, though, how the story could have been presented any more appealingly and much more perceptively than it was in this version.

and on his arm by Viv (Frances Barber), the deceitful, vulgar, seductive, careerist flat-mate (or, courtesy of her *non-venerable* parents). Viv harbours a secret passion for Jane which turns to hate, though the open with Anne (Dinah Lee), who makes 'fashionable' collages of Hitler and rapist beavers away a little too readily as model, and steals, or 'rather', Annie's boyfriend, Rusty (the Reddington). A pop-singing couple, precious but of little worth, Rusty always prepared to cash in sexually, financially on his moral bankruptcy. The merry band is completed by the Frisbee demonstrators and the manager to persuade the Frisbee demonstrators to persuade the manager to give him, for his physical comfort (and some sexual discomfort).

Lucie's concentration on this social microcosm—wonderfully dramatically because his characters are wonderfully witty and perceptive (though the social background is a little less convincing)—and because his cast, so ably assisted by Mike Bradwell, is so ably assisted by portraying the nuances and

Jack Cox

Take a Cold Tub, Sir! The story of the Boy's Own Paper  
Wendy Forrester's evocation of the paper's own history  
Lutterworth, £8.95.  
0188 2505 5

Take a Cold Tub, Sir! is a companion volume to *Great-Grandma's Weekly*, Wendy Forrester's evocation of the paper's own history. It was written in the TLS of August 15, 1980; like the earlier book it is an enjoyable mixture of anthology and commentary. There are, however, some significant differences. Wendy Forrester made her compilation as an enthusiastic reader and collector of the paper's history and coverage to the Victorian years and provided a useful analysis of the paper's content. Jack Cox was editor of *The Boy's Own Paper* from 1946 until it finally closed in 1967. He aims to cover the whole eighty-eight years of BOP's existence, to take the nature of the content for granted, and, inevitably, gives an insider's view, with a special concentration on the personalities of the paper's various editors. It is sad to record that Jack Cox died in 1981. He had completed the writing of the greater part of *Take a Cold Tub, Sir!* but did not have an opportunity to revise a final draft for publication. In a tribute to him the publishers describe his work on the manuscript as a 'labour of love', and that is apparent on every page.

It is difficult to see exactly why BOP should have inspired such warm affection from generations of readers and journalists, though a clue is given by a letter it received in 1949. The letter came from Germany: 'My English pen-friend sends me B.O.P. every month. It helps me to get a wonderful picture of how the average British boy lives.' That may be unrelatable sociology but it probably indicates only that the pen-friend had found there shared many tastes and interests. Like most successful periodicals, BOP had a fairly restricted appeal. Although it liked to assume that 'boys' were the same the whole world over, its main concern was to provide a very special image of British boyhood.

BOP was created by The Religious Trust Society in 1879 in an attempt to draw readers away from the 'books' and 'penny dreadfuls' of the time. A special committee of the RTS was set up to carry out market research into the magazines available for boys. They were particularly impressed by Samuel Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine* (1856-1874), which had recently closed, and bought the title: here was the prototype of BOP. The new periodical was to be 'sound and healthy' in tone,

## The image of British boyhood

Peter Keating

and the Committee noted with something like regret that it would be 'impossible' to exclude from it 'the notice of athletic sports and games'. That clearly embodied a recognition that the older kinds of moralistic publications favoured by the RTS would not serve present purposes: BOP had to compete in the new late Victorian mass-market.

It was this combination of moral control exerted by the RTS and the commercial experience of its first managing editor, George Andrew Hutchinson, that brought immediate success to BOP. In the early days it cost one penny and was published weekly.

early number of BOP, and he was commissioned to write more. But Kingston learnt that he was suffering from a fatal illness and instead of a stirring tale of the Arctic wastes he submitted an equally stirring personal letter to his readers. It appeared in BOP, together with a presentation portrait, shortly after his death. Kingston thanked his readers for all the pleasure they had given him and assured them that he was 'leaving this life in unspokeable happiness because I rest my soul on my Saviour'. He closed his letter: 'Dear Boys, I ask you to give your hearts to Christ, and earnestly pray that all of you may meet me in

stories as well as Talbot Baines Reed, 'no true successor' was ever found. That judgment cannot be fairly applied to adventure fiction. Percy F. Westerman, W. E. Johns, and C. S. Forester were valued twentieth-century contributors. But perhaps there were other reasons for thinking that Reed was irreplaceable.

True to their religious traditions the RTS were always uneasy about the central place given to fiction, and Jack Cox shared that concern. As editor in the 1950s he regretted that a decision was not taken to drop fiction and 'go all out for a practical-interest paper'. It must be doubtful whether any policy change at that late date could have saved BOP, but it is certainly true that a strong part of the paper's appeal lay in the interest it generated in practical and technological topics. 'How it Works' articles ranged from bicycles to prop-driven racing cars, from the gramophone to television. Discussions of country-craft, scouting, and hobbies of every possible kind, were always popular: fundamental social and moral values may greatly have changed during its lifetime, but BOP managed to keep up-to-date with the modern boy's various sparetime interests. Stamp-collecting was, apparently, the only hobby to be featured throughout the entire life of BOP.

But, if the rather eccentric title of this book is any guide, it was the correspondence column that made the most memorable contribution to the paper's bracing tone. The advice 'Take a Cold Tub, Sir (or "Man")!' came from Dr Gordon Stables who, under the pseudonym 'Medicus', also contributed a medical column to BOP. Dr Stables, in fact, was a real doctor, a real writer, and a real boy. He was certainly the weirdest. His own life story would have been rejected as too fanciful by any respectable fiction editor. He was born in Banffshire, studied medicine at Aberdeen University, and while a student took part in a whaling expedition. The ship was trapped in an ice-pack and reported as lost. When he returned home he found his family in mourning for him. He then served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy, became a recognized authority on dogs and 'kennel editor' of the *Livestock Journal* before joining BOP. He wrote adventure stories which could be published only after a good deal of sub-editing, but in exchange for these silent favours he provided BOP with its immensely popular column 'Health Hints for Growing Boys' and invaluable publicity.

Every summer he took to the road in his 'hand yacht', a gigantic horse-drawn caravan. He was accompanied by a coachman, valet, cook

Newfoundland dog, and a parrot. They carried with them a startling collection of objects which included a violin, harmonium, and guitar, a Royal Navy sword and 'a good revolver'. It was now that Dr Stables did most of his writing for BOP: in the winter he retired to his Berkshire home with his wife, six children and countless dogs.

On the road in summer Dr Stables made regular stops so that he could receive the gifts of fresh food presented to him by BOP admirers. He would respond by giving a lecture on the need to lead healthy lives. He set an example by taking a tub in the open air every morning 'with two buckets of cold water, an enormous sponge, a hunk of hard yellow soap, and a very hairy, rough towel the size of a double-bed sheet.' Together with plenty of fresh air, sensible food, no smoking, and regular exercise, the cold tub was Dr Stables' suggested cure for most adolescent ills.

Queries on subjects other than health could be treated with an editorial brusqueness that made Dr Stables seem tame. Jack Cox says that most answers were 'straightforward and informative' but even he cannot resist printing the ruder examples. 'A man must always take the nationality of his father' one correspondent was told. 'Does your relative think he is a Welshman by any chance? If so he had better think again.' Another correspondent received the information he asked for but it was hardly encouraging. 'The fact of your being a tradesman's son would not, of itself, be a bar to your becoming an officer in the army; but a far higher standard of education would be required of you.'

Some of the most interesting queries were from apprentices worried by work conditions. The editor responded with a paternal heaviness that seems to mingle sympathy with a fear that he himself might be accused of encouraging discontent. His advice is strongly on the side of 'conciliation', 'a little respectful remonstrance with your master', and 'willing obedience'; he insists that 'to talk too much of "rights" and what you can "claim" in the way of holidays is a serious mistake.' Behind the advice is the editorial conviction that complaints are really a sign of weak character. An 'anxious mother', concerned at the long hours her son was having to work as an apprentice ironmonger was comforted with 'Better for a man that he wear the yoke in his youth.'

That was the true message of BOP. Boys were encouraged to enjoy being boys, but they were never allowed to forget that it was Men that Britain really needed.



Edward Gorey's idea of a very notorious couple of cats, Mungoferie and Rumpelsteezer from Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats by T. S. Eliot, with drawings by Gorey (Faber, £4.95, 0 371 11971 9).

The opening number featured 'My First Football Match' by Talbot Baines Reed who more than any other writer set the public-school tone of decency and fair-play that was to be so characteristic of the paper. Reed was the perfect contributor, enormously popular and totally indifferent to payment for his work. Novels such as *The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch* and *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* were first serialized in BOP and the copyrights made over to the RTS as part of Reed's service to 'Christian literature'.

Reed's connection with BOP was, however, exceptional. It was far more usual for the editor to seek out established writers to provide suitable adventure stories. W. H. G. Kingston—author of the celebrated *Peter the Whaler*—contributed a serial, *Powder Monkey to Admiral*, to an

Heaven. Jules Verne was another well-established author who was happy to see his later work serialized in BOP. Jack Cox suggests that an especially close relationship soon developed between Verne and his young British audience and gives this as a reason why in Britain Verne's novels are still often classified as 'juvenile fiction'. In 1886, when Verne was shot and crippled by a deranged nephew, BOP readers were able to demonstrate their affection. They clubbed together to buy him a gold-mounted walking-stick which he said to have treasured.

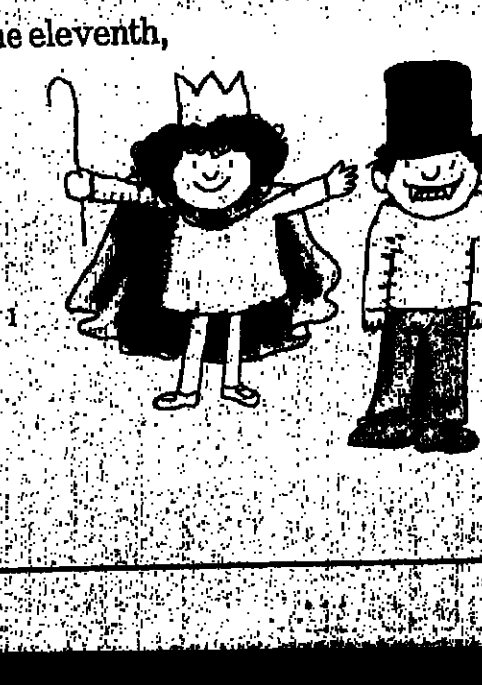
So thick is the nostalgia surrounding the early days of BOP that even now the authors most readily associated with the paper tend to be Victorian. Jack Cox points out that although editor after editor longed to discover someone who could write school-

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Have you seen them all?





## A blueprint for fun

Gavin Ewart

IAN DURY (Editor)  
Hard Lines: New Poetry and Prose  
Faber, £1.95.  
0 571 13073 9

The voice of the teenager, and of his spiritual associates, is heard throughout the land; and adolescent revolt (which in its purest form hates everybody — no exceptions — over twenty-five) changes its vocabulary and its terminology. As in the left wing political poetry of the 1930s, which fifty years ago was glad to write, there is more heat than light in most of it. But, as the wise and tolerant pedagogues say (easily the most infuriating thing they could possibly say) rebellion in the young is natural, to be expected, in its way quite a good thing, and you'll grow out of it.

Possibly the saddest thing about a collection of previously unpublished work is that very often they do grow out of it. Thatcherism and economic imperatives take over, it's every man or woman for himself or herself; and the generous impulses, the idealism and the commonsense, are sacrificed to the need for a living wage. Good writing, in people of this age, occurs almost accidentally, largely influenced by what they have recently experienced and shedding styles. With the talented ones (and in a sense all of them are sleepwalkers) there is a kind of pre-echo, of the sort that some old LPs used to have, when you could hear the note sung by the singer before she sang it "for real". This is the indication of what is to come, what pompous people over forty call "promise".

Some of these writers have more of this than others. At this stage, head-patting is not in order. It would be

wrong to encourage some, if this is going to make others feel that they've failed. The individual English teacher is the one to give encouragement and make suggestions. Ian Dury's manifesto, "About this book", states: We all have brains and feelings. We are all equally capable of changing the world by creating a world of our own.

That last line has a subjective ring about it and it's perhaps too open to interpretation (is that "world of our own" in our own heads or in reality, in actuality?). Elsewhere, apart from prophesying sex colleges and model airplane colleges, Dury says a lot that William Morris said in *News From Nowhere* (1891) — though good ideas don't necessarily become less good with the passage of time. "Manual labour will become a healthy weekend pastime", for example, and "Absorbing and demanding self-employment will be the order of the day". "Music, drawing, writing and fun will be compulsory school subjects from the age of 3." Perhaps the worst one can say of this (trendy idealistic claptrap according to some) is that it is difficult. Things that turn out to be fun usually do so by accident; they can't be put on a curriculum ("Rarely, rarely, comest thou/Spirit of Delight!"). "Looking on the bright side, perpetual progress is inevitable." Yes, but first we've got to get past The Bomb somehow — one way or the other.

Hypocrisy about sex, about class, about colour is not to be found in this book. On the other hand honesty, truth and the willingness to look an idea in the face are virtues in both the poems and the prose pieces. The drawings are likewise realistic, simple and effective. Some of the poems might be the mature work of E. J. Thribb; some of them might be Early Thribb (when he used rhyme). Others

are a good deal better than this. Pop songs, Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, West Indian music, seem detectable from time to time in the background. Masturbation, glue-sniffing, academic malpractices, the threat of nuclear war, the terror of conventional jobs and the conjugal treadmill; they all get a mention.

This all takes me back to 1933, to the time when my own seventeen-year-old poems were published in *New Verse* and *The Listener*, and one line pinched from Havelock Ellis ("My penis is nine inches 'long'") was censored, by Orison or my English teacher, I forget which. Should precocious publication be encouraged? Doesn't it lead to self-consciousness, even to the kind of "inner circle" feeling of being part of an élite that is satirized here in a reference to adult writers? "They all know each other and go to the same literary receptions and evenings and send each other postcards."

I don't think my own early publication did me any harm. I never thought I was Shakespeare. I was proud to be in print, but not inordinately so. In any case, part of Ian Dury's contention (he's "Britain's most articulate spokesman for rock 'n' roll" according to *The Sunday Times* and has a "legendary" band, The Blockheads) is that anybody (or almost anybody) can do it, and everybody should have a go. In this he is in agreement with the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, a very different character, who wrote a book urging everybody to write, illustrated with his own poems. The publishers of *Hard Lines* do in fact invite contributions for a proposed follow-up.

The closing date for this year's W. H. Smith Young Writers' Competition is February 28. The competition, which celebrates its silver jubilee this year, awards prizes to poetry, prose and plays submitted by young writers.

## Modern monsters

Tom Shippey

KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND.  
*Beowulf*  
Illustrated by Charles Keeping  
Oxford University Press, £4.50.  
019 279770 0

The theory of evolution is mighty yet; and one of its commonest corollaries in the literary world is the belief that ancient art is appropriate now to children, so that the myths of Asgard survive as a Puffin book, Robin Hood reappears as a Disney fable, and most modern Arthurs have turned into adolescent ingenious defeated continually by an adult sophistication they cannot match.

It is true that the naivety of that belief will be seen immediately by anyone who really appreciates ancient art; but this does not make it easier for such people to produce (as in this case) a child's version of *Beowulf*. Something of the original has to be kept. But most of that original is too dark, hard-hearted and (especially) convoluted for any but an adult understanding to reach. What kind of compromise should one aim at, then? For compromise it has to be.

Charles Keeping's illustrations show particularly well the struggle between fidelity and contemporary appeal. Something of the genuine Anglo-Saxon love of unfocused complexity comes over in the myriad details round the edge of the drawings: every brooch, buckle, sword-hilt and mead-horn has its tiny, inked-in, individual, wavy pattern. Totally modern, by contrast, is the wayward individualism of the warriors' faces, with straying hair, sagging eyes and stumpy teeth all seeming to say "This is what lay behind ideals. Do not let the words of poets fool you." There is no modern way to draw Grendels, though, since to us such creatures have no reality behind them except the psychological one of fear and isolation

in winter-bound garths. Keeping rides heavily there on shading, with blond hair and flesh from which only sharp-outlined claws stick out, like the sharp and rocks against the mist-lake monsters' lake. Children, I would guess, would find these drawings disturbing: they have the impact of M.R. James ghost story rather than of a Maurice Sendak "Wild Thing".

And then there is the hero. Even a child is going to notice that in these pictures Beowulf looks stupid. His grin is too broad and his nose too small for insight. Is this another case of the modern looking patronizingly back down the evolutionary ladder? Or is a response to the original poem, in which indeed the outgoing confidence of the hero is whittled down by threat to a brave despair that can, in that point only to a lifelong if unstable integrity: "I was seven winters / when the lord of treasures / took me from my father...?"

This last feeling, I think, can no longer be communicated easily, like and cheap palliations come readily nowadays, and death is rarely initiated. Still, Kevin Crossley-Holland has a fair try at blending ancient and modern, like his illustrations. Modern are the guns, buttocks, hawking and tooth-picks that remind us how the old days people were still people. Ancient is the mood of involvement, in which adopting one son seems disinheriting another, victory means casualties, and talking directly about such matters is not only close but probably unlucky as well. The *Beowulf* was always in the telling, as the story, so that reducing it to a 600 word novella must inevitably be rash. This is a thoughtful and respectful retelling, though, in which writer and illustrator have helped each other. Wisely, the translator has kept a few words over to give the poet's last unexpected summary of his last character straight: "They said that all kings on earth he was the best, the most gentle, the most just to his people, the most eager for him."

## Marks of progress

Brian Alderson

HANNELORE DAUBERT, KLAUS DODERER and others (Editors)  
*Lexikon der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur: Ergänzungs- und Registerband*  
713pp. Weinheim: Beltz Verlag.  
DM 168  
3 407 56514 3

The three main volumes of this hefty encyclopedia were published between 1975 and 1979. In his preface to the last, which ran from P to Z, the director of the whole enterprise, Klaus Doderer, gave promise of the present supplementary volume, which brings him to the end of some twenty years of work. As he recognizes, you cannot produce a reference book on this scale, published by instalments, without failing to take on board in the early stages some constituents which are clearly called for as progress continues. In consequence we find, here, as sensible afterthoughts, a host of articles — especially in the A to O section — about people, countries or ideas which have shown themselves to have a significance commensurate with that of the founder-members. (Among them are some forty-seven rather uneven articles on subjects from the English-speaking world, from Adams, Richard to Zindel, Paul — though Zemach, Margot, still arguably a more eligible "Z", still remains embedded in "USA".)

As well as the 561 pages devoted to these articles there are 140 given over to the two indexes of people and subjects. The first of these is straightforward enough, not only integrating the new arrivals into the main alphabetical sequence but also recording the names of individuals (like Margot Zemach) who receive passing mention in other places. The second index, a fifty-column affair, is altogether more ambitious, since it

## Short and easy: junior fiction

Ann Thwaite

Jane Gardam once said that she wrote her books because she so badly wanted to write them. I think I would probably have died if I hadn't written *A Few Fair Days*, she confessed a little extravagantly, of that extraordinary, accessible book, in Edward Blighen's *Blackbird Bridge and William* must be the only book written for a series ever to be shortlisted for a major prize, even so. Gardam's individuality is stamped by the series formula. One feels nobody needs to write a Blackbird, a Gazelle, an Antelope or a Hopscotch book. They are often attractive enough books, books which serve a useful purpose, but rarely are they stories which linger in the mind, that catch and delight.

And yet it is just at this stage when children are still having to work at the decoding, when reading is still a lot of an effort, that they need to be assured that the whole troublesome business is really worthwhile. The contents of these early solo reading books may determine whether a child becomes a real reader rather than merely someone who can read. Many of us feel that these "bridge" books, intended to wean children away from picture books and easy readers and on to longer, solid texts, should always be used alongside picture books, that the teacher or librarian is wrong who believes an Antelope is proper material for a seven or eight year old but that Graham Oakley's *Church* is a fine indulgence, and should have been listened to years before.

*Linda's Lie* by Bernard Ashley has a small claim to fame in being the first book to have rigidly controlled vocabularies. Most of the "control" is merely the publisher decreeing the book's brevity, its black and white illustrations, and a suitably large typeface and this goes for the books at this reading level outside the series format, too. The main advantage of the series is that it enables the publisher to knock a pound or two off the price. The words themselves, and even the sentence structure, may be just as difficult as in the most eccentric picture book. "Porcupines only attack humans if you make them angry", one of a recent batch of Gazelles begins. Not an easy sentence. One might rather the young reader was decoding "Miss Fidget Wonkham-Sling" who wore an iron hat and took no nonsense from anyone.

Employment of course is the first consideration at this stage. Our main device to the reader is to find books that he can enjoy. Beverly Cleary, the American writer, wrote recently in the *Horn Book Magazine* of the depressing the curious reader will gain from the first some sense of the cultural direction of the encyclopedia as a whole. As Professor Doderer has said, it aims to be more than a mere record of names and dates, and both in the choice of articles and in the encouragement of critical comment it seeks to bring out some of the arguments with which the subject of children's literature is fraught.

As the subject-index delves through its strings of figures under the head-words as "Bürgerkrieg" and "Sozialistische", the encyclopedia tends to politicize its commentaries with wildly fluctuating emphasis (foreigners for instance are always dogmatically treated). It is not an opinion however, even Professor Doderer acknowledges that you cannot satisfactorily count on weight and uniformity of a work which has some four hundred contributors.

Despite the shortcomings, the book is a triumph of the can-do spirit, a testament to the tenacity with which Professor Doderer and his team have sought to make the *Lexikon* complete and as factually based as possible. We may soon be in a position to judge whether the "team" rather than the individual approach to the compilation of reference books is children's literature is to be preferred, but whatever handbooks may come down upon an English reader's desk is doubtful if they will have the such encouragement to research and dependable work.

he satisfied with what I have", and another asks "Is the moral of *Henry Huggins* if you find a dog without a collar, you get to keep it?"

There is time when the skill is totally mastered for the challenges and the underlying messages, and there are few lessons in this collection, though there are lots of good school stories, including: *The School Donkey*, *Monster Monday* (a surefire idea, with a dinosaur turning up in the school playground), *Bernie's Bird*, *Secrets* and *The Sky-Blue Dragon*. The story that I liked most in this category was *The Steel Band* by Wendy Green, perhaps because (as the dedication reveals) it has its roots very firmly in reality. The children are real children, though it is wish-fulfillment stuff. The band plays at the Albert Hall, just as the play in *Secrets* is performed before the Queen and Class Four's *Dragon* is chosen for the Mayor's procession. Of the other Antelopes, I think children will like best *The Running of the Deer* by that accomplished professional, Geoffrey Trease. It is an exciting and convincing story of children involved in the arresting of a gang of deer poachers.

There is no doubt that children do like exciting stories — however unconvincing. And there will undoubtedly be satisfied readers for *Ask Oliver: the Mystery of the Missing Diamond* by Terrance Dicks, in spite of its rather offputtingly large black typeface. It is much more successful, because much more simply constructed, than the rather similar *Whizz Kid* by Sarah McNeill, though that does have the useful ancillary purpose of showing a disabled child at the centre of the action.

*Linda's Lie* by Bernard Ashley has a small claim to fame in being the first

MARY COCKETT: *The School Donkey*. Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood. (Gazelle.) Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 10824 1

ANNE FORSYTH: *Monster Monday*. Illustrated by Sally Holmes. (Gazelle.) Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 10910 8

GERALDINE KAYE: *The Sky-Blue Dragon*. Illustrated by Glenys Ambrus. (Hopscotch.) Hodder and Stoughton. £2.95. 0 340 28215 0

FRANK FLYNN: *Bernie's Bird*. Illustrated by Thelma Lambert. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 10927 2

FRANCIS THOMAS: *Secrets*. Illustrated by Laszlo Acs. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10882 9

WENDY GREEN: *The Steel Band*. Illustrated by Jennifer Northway. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 10777 6

GEOFFREY TREASE: *The Running of the Deer*. Illustrated by Maurcen Bradley.

book to anticipate the arrival of pound pieces. More importantly it does manage to tell a good story while facing up to the sort of small problems which can so easily escalate and dominate children's lives. "Lying was easier than she thought. All you had to do was say it." But of course it is afterwards that things get complicated. The other Blackbird in this batch is pure nonsense, and very enjoyable nonsense too. *Shepherd's Pie* tells the story of the last giants in the world, who believe that shepherd's pie must be made of real shepherds, a cause for considerable alarm if your Dad happens to be a shepherd.

It is difficult to be sure what will make children laugh. Kornei Chukovsky once defined it as the "tossy-turvy", and the popularity of Donald Bisset's nonsense stories, unreadable to most adults, is a good instance of this appeal. The new Bisset is *The Joyous Adventures of Snakey Boo*. Snakey Boo is the captain of a boat which has a frog door in its side for Hogarth Frog, just as houses have cat doors. In the river the small fish carry umbrellas as anti-pike protection, and Hogarth muses "Isn't water lovely and wet? Wouldn't it be awful if it was dry?". Bisset's own rather amateurish drawings embellish the pages as usual. No possible morals here. Nor indeed in the much more sophisticated, wilder comedy of *The Great Smile Robbery* by Roger McGough. Ignore the uninviting jacket. Once inside it is lavishly and splendidly illustrated. This is compulsive stuff, full of encouragement and surprises, from somewhere on the edge of that popular territory occupied by *Pingus the Boggymen* and *The Twiss*. Somewhere not very far from Miss Fidget Wonkham-Strong.

(Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10789 X

SARAH MCNEILL: *Whizz Kid*. Illustrated by Trevor Stubley. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10877 2

TERRANCE DICKS: *Ask Oliver: the Mystery of the Missing Diamond*. Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood. Pepper Press. £3.95. 0 237 456 36 2

BERNARD ASHLEY: *Linda's Lie*. Illustrated by Janet Duchesne. (Blackbird.) Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 099 4

DOROTHY CLARK: *Shepherd's Pie*. Illustrated by the author. (Blackbird.) Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 098 6

DONALD BISSET: *The Joyous Adventures of Snakey Boo*. Illustrated by the author. Methuen. £3.95. 0 416 22410 5

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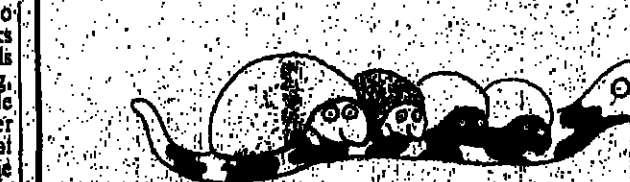
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Judith Elkin

GINA WILSON  
*The Whisper*  
Faber, £5.50.  
0 571 11930 1

In *The Whisper* Gina Wilson explores the precarious, ever-shifting nature of close relationships. It is a family's complex reactions to an outsider, demonstrating the destructive potential of individual selfishness, when everyone is too busy with their own lives to accommodate others.

Lily Fry is thirteen, an only child and rather lonely since she and her parents moved to a remote farmhouse. At the beginning of the story, she is looking forward, with mixed feelings, to the imminent arrival of her fourteen-year-old cousin, Marie. Marie is an orphan who has lived happily for the previous six years with her grandparents in Scotland, until her grandfather was

taken ill.

Marie is a quiet, approachable girl who turns out to be very gifted musically. She fits in easily at school but rather uneasily into life at home. Lily is very confused by Marie's presence, alternately welcoming her, and then resenting the intrusion into her previously stable family and trying to make Marie's life intolerable. Marie's apparently calm self-sufficiency does not help. Neither does the parent's similar confusion which they attempt to hide under their everyday business.

The seeds of jealousy grow in Lily as Marie demonstrates her musical ability and is quickly accepted at school and the local church. As the story proceeds, Lily begins to show the unpleasant side of her nature which is normally suppressed. She spreads spiteful gossip which shows Marie in an unflattering light and alienates her friends, apart from the ever-loyal Bella. There are times when Lily and Marie are quite close, as they work together for a music festival and the

school concert, but each time something happens to unhinge Lily and send her off on her destructive path. Only towards the end of the book does Lily really begin to warm towards Marie, but by then the spread of gossip has got beyond her control and she finds herself unable to counteract it.

Portraying a character's rapidly changing moods and inconsistencies, while maintaining credibility, is difficult and on the whole Gina Wilson manages this very skilfully. At times, however, the story seems a little far-fetched and, particularly at the beginning, is rather bitty. It tends to fluctuate between being written from an adult position, almost as a sociological report, to looking at the problems from the teenager's viewpoint. The author has the ability to create characters in depth but lacks consistency and confidence. Marie is just too "good", too accommodating, displaying none of the predictable recriminations against anyone for her unattractive life. But the story says a great deal about the complexities of genuine friendship and family loyalty.

UP 11.50



## The realm of ideas: children's books in France

Anne Corbett

The French have come in for a lot of criticism during this past year for protectionist tactics, like routing Japanese videocassette through the one-man customs post at Poitiers. But in the realm of ideas the French remain extraordinarily hospitable. Children's books of the last year yet again testify to an openness which goes beyond the economics of co-production.

New books from Helen Oxenbury, Rosemary Wells, Arnold Lobel and Jan Pienkowski are prominent on shelves for the young, along with some uneven books from Colin McNaughton. *Eloise* by Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight has been greeted with rapture. Graham Oakley's Church Mice series have been chosen for an interesting bilingual venture by Gallimard. Barry Hines and Ian Serrallier make their appearance for older children. Robert Westall is now out in paperback. There is a big range of German authors, an increasing number for whom Spanish is

the first language (many of them Latin American), and (Italians with Italo Calvino to the fore).

The prestigious Fondation de France prize went to the American, William Steig, for *Dominic* (Gallimard), though the dog hero, with his advanced taste in hats and his commitment to solidarity reminded me (and the panel?) of the French president on his best days. The picture book prize went to one of the few authors who is already available in English, Gabrielle Vincent, whose expressive mice Ernest and Celestine were this time at the photographer's, *Ernest et Celestine chez le photographe* (Daculot).

But many of the good French writers seem unable to cross the Channel. I am surprised, I would have thought that the wine-buying, Dordogne-visitng English would have liked much of the recent children's fiction, which combines a good story line with a sharp eye for French society and a sharp ear for the French language. I think for example of Lise le Cour's *Tutu-Mauve au Jardin des Plantes* (Ecole des Loisirs), a story with

a light touch about a little girl who visits the zoo when it is supposed to be closed and when the animals feel entitled to relax. "Shall we put her on a chain and make her dance?" ask the bears. Another attractive book with a Paris décor *Minut Malakoff la souris du Métro* (Ecole des Loisirs) is from Irene Schwartz and the prolific illustrator Michel Gay, an everyday story of metro-based mice which is a little reminiscent of *The Borrowers*, in its ability to make us feel for the mouse (he's stuck with the chewing gum of a careless passenger).

Pef, a great comic, returns with *Henriette Bichonier (Le Monstre Polu)*, Gallimard in an updated version of the prince disguised as a frog waiting for the understanding princess. This one is very French 1980s in her insults. Albin Michel Jeunesse, which mostly goes in for co-productions, has in *Mon Papa à Moi* by Berthine Marceau and Claude Aubert, an attractive family album with verses about unlikely family relations, and illustrations in the style of Miss Carter.

My favourite picture book is Yves Pommeau's *Le Voyage de Corbelle et Corbillo* (Ecole des Loisirs). Pommeau is sometimes didactic. But this time he perfectly captures the spirit of the argumentative urbanized French about to set off on holiday. His crows cannot decide where to go, what to take ("I must have my flower dress", "I must take my straw hat", "And my spotted scarf", "And my plastic sandals", "And the camping gas", "And the saucenpan", "And the oil and vinegar"). Once off, they rise to all situations. I particularly liked the way they dealt with the name-dropping bird of paradise.

Among the fiction for readers of eight or so and up, one of the most original comes from a consistently good Nathan series (Arc en Poche). Hubert Montiel's *Gue et les Hindous* begins with the hero's birthday dinner (the parents bring in the cake singing "Happy birthday to you" in the original "to be chic and to teach him English") and continues

with him having to sit through an adult meal with the boring guest interminably describing Hindu belief in reincarnation, though suddenly that is not as boring as it seems.

Outstanding among the books for those of ten and over is Claude Roy's *Le Chat qui parlait malgré lui* (in Gallimard's Folio Junior series, which is still the best paperback collection in terms of presentation and cover illustration, though a shade conservative in its choice of French authors). French critics compare this Roy book with Lewis Carroll and Saki. But the reactions of the little boy are surely very French. He is not surprised that the cat can speak, only that the cat can speak poetry. And that cat is the stuff of the French republican tradition: "Do not expect me to betray my people, merely to pander to the vanity of a scientist after a Nobel prize." For the same age group François Sautereau has again produced an appealing story, *Les Indiens de la rue Jules Ferry* (Editions de l'Amitié). This one is about a gang of children who think they are well organized to take on adults.

French initiatives to reach adolescents who are not already confirmed readers, continue, Le Seuil, a newcomer to children's publishing, has a series "Point Virgule", of which the most interesting is an original story by a Chilean refugee (Antonio Skarmeta, *T'es pas mort?*). His refugee hero is struggling for recognition among his French peers, ill at ease with racist attitudes and the cold. It is effectively told. Casterman also has a series, "L'ami du poche", which tempts by its contemporary character. I liked Oliver Lécirvin's *Blues pour Marco* in which a gang of teenagers become friends with the owner of a record shop and only realize when he is assassinated that they have lost a real friend (though my children's view was that it reminded them of English stories they had read when they were much younger).

But there is no doubt that one of the French strengths continues to be a republishing of well known stories in a

replication of well known stories in a format designed to appeal to young readers. French critics bemoan the fact that there are so many reprints. But would be churlish not to welcome a number of the Gallimard and Ecole des Loisirs reprints (for example Gallimard's new editions of *Les L'Écume des Jours*, *Camus L'Étranger* and *Golding's Lord of the Flies*). And Gallimard continues to experiment with the misnamed Enfantimages, the very short and beautifully illustrated stories which tie in with a French tradition of studying literature in "morceaux choisis". This year's selection includes *Le Petit Prince*, the Kafka story superbly complemented by Henri Galemard's narrative illustrations and *Notre Dame de Hironnelles*, a story by Marguerite Yourcenar of a Mount Athos monk driving out pagan nymphs, which provides food for much argument (Georges Lemoine responds with Byzantine folk images).

Most memorable of all in the same series is Michel Tournier's *Que me reste-t-il de mon père*, an extract from *Coq et Bruyère*. It grips from the first sentence "How can one hope to be world famous pianist when one is called Bidoché." We are straight into the world of the ambitious first bourgeois and the ambivalence of success for the sensitive. Jean Clavercie's illustrations are masterly.

Finally, back almost to where we came in. Publishers continue to bring out poetry books, notably including Agnès Rosenstiel's *Comptes et comptines* (Casterman Jeunesse) for the young, and Gallimard's series in the older readers (*L'Anglais et l'Adolescence* being among the new titles). But most ambitious of all is Jacques Charpentier's version of *Old Possum's Book of Cats* (Nathan). It is simply entitled *Chats* and the response is simply Bravol! If the French can succeed in that, surely some English publishers can be made courageous in translating what they see as quintessentially - ie, difficult - French?

## Both kinds of story

Ruth Harris

MARGARET BAKER

*The Goose Feather Gown*  
Illustrated by Mary Baker  
Hodder and Stoughton, £4.95.  
0 340 28320 3

*The Goose Feather Gown* is a collection of stories, which was first published in 1939 under the title *Fifteen Tales for Little Children*. They are unpretentious but effective. If you try reading them aloud to a child of any age, you will have its attention. Why do they work so well? There is always a good idea and each story has a beginning, a middle and an end. Take "Number 13", a story about a house that moved, a house that hated being Number 13 in Lilac Avenue because she'd heard the painter say that it was an unlucky number. That's the beginning with smoking fires, dripping taps and draughts everywhere. Then the house decides that she must go away, tries to see if she can move, a corner at a time, and finds that she can do it but waits until all the other houses are asleep, with their curtains drawn, to make her escape. The climax comes when the other houses wake up and decide to change places and there is a wonderful entanglement with all the gentlemen reading papers that talk about the wrong kind of politics and one pint of milk to fill seven expectant mugs. In the end everything is happily arranged; the houses left on Lilac Avenue are secured with ivy and collars and Number 13 is found by a policeman miles away with a charming view from all the windows. She calls herself Beech Lodge and lives contented and happy ever after, only worried by the question whether 13 had been proved a lucky or an unlucky number. Once the fact that a house has feelings and can be mobile is accepted, everything is logical, everything can be explained and the illustrations complement the text with a delicious

drawing of the house beginning to move and a nice one of a cat purring over the unexpected bounty of five extra pints of milk.

There's no condescension in the writing. This is what actually happened and it's as real as Cinderella or Hans Andersen and although Margaret Baker's "Goose Feather Gown" is a version of Cinderella and her "First Dormouse" is based on Sleeping Beauty, she is really nearer to Hans Andersen who can write both kinds of fairy story, the one that is inspired by an enhanced vision of things as they actually are and the other that breaks through into another world. Hans Andersen can feel with the snails under the burdock leaves and feel so passionately that we care about them too. He sees the Mer-King's palace so clearly that we can watch the mussel-shells continually opening and shutting in the roof. Margaret Baker's stories are perhaps a children's version of Hans Andersen. There is no mutilation; she would never be haunted by the chop at the ankles of the hangman's axe to let those red shoes go off dancing by themselves or

feel the pain when that loathsome witch, adrip with snails, cuts out the little mermaid's tongue. Hans is much safer world to walk in before the lights are put out. Here the stories of old happily. The shoe-box is made into doll's house, the Cinderella goes to the ball in her goose-feather gown, softer and more shining than any silk or velvet, and the duck leaves the duckness and leads her down to a breakfast where the bacon is sizzling hot.

This is a limited world; there's no talk of the immortal soul, death, part of the dance and the dark, but it's good - temperate and well-mannered and for children well-cloistered virtues may be the most appropriate. Susan makes the best of when she spoils the lovely marriage remembers that it was a dream and meant to buy when she called on the pedlar and how pleasant it was to polish and rub with anything except the richest man in all Ireland. He was certainly the happiest and what else may not open new doors but should give real pleasure.

## Orangels and Demons

Lemons have demons  
biter as sin,  
but plomes have nun in -  
if, that is,  
they are the rype tipe -  
while the strawberry  
is very sweet,  
and consequently  
nice to eat.

Alice Thomas

## Young and very young

Kicki Moxon Browne

*Dance Away* vividly demonstrates the impressive urge to break into song and dance which is a frequent theme in José Aruego's picture books. He has teamed up again with the author George Shannon and co-illustrator Ariane Dewey (with whom he produced the hilarious *Lizard's Song*). Aruego once said in an interview that he is often so amused by his own work that he has to down tools and roar with laughter and this enjoyment is evident in the plump animals with oddily expressive faces and bodies bounding across his pages.

In a lower key but as enjoyable is *In a New Move on, Frog!* The book is dedicated to Pat Hutchins who clearly enjoyed its understated humour and pursuit of a single idea. The frog of the title is looking for a home of its own, but all the holes he finds are already occupied. (The reader has the advantage of being able to see eyes shining out of the darkness, whereas the frog is constantly taken aback by the inhabitants leaping out.) Suspense and predictability in equal doses make this book just right for very young readers. The text is concise, the illustrations mainly visual.

Also chiefly visual is *The Night Express*, with lovely rich paintings by the Japanese artist Taki Kitada. (The text translated from the Japanese, is "best in the world" and with a small boy in charge, roars through tunnels, across bridges, past the sea and under the stars and the moon before pulling into the station just on time. The last couple of pages reveal that the train is in fact a humble wooden toy train laid out on a clumsily chalked track; the bridge is a chair placed across the track, a mountain is a pile of clothes - and there are innumerable objects to trace back from "real life" at the end of the book to the imaginary train journey.

Three of the books in this collection are concerned with individual adults trying to make the world a better place. *Gardener George Goes to Town*, by George Shannon, turns a grey town into a riot of tropical plants, making the busy little-drooping inhabitants a nicer and happier lot. *Miss Rumphius* is also about planting flowers to make the world more beautiful, but it is a longer and more complex story. We are told the whole life story of Miss Rumphius, the Lupin Lady, from Edwardian childhood, through travel to all corners of the world, to settling down in middle age in a house by the sea. During a long illness she is greatly consoled by the sight of a clump of lupins, and decides to scatter lupin seeds wherever she goes. At the close of the book she is a very old woman and the object of love and admiration. The lupins are now growing all over the neighbourhood and all spreading. Although the book covers a large time span and a wide geographical area, the pace is measured and perfectly balanced with a blend of detail and generalization, and the illustrations are attractive and moving. *Jo-Jo and Mike* is about a sign painter and his dog who live in a small, cluttered town. As the town suddenly faces rapid expansion, Mike is asked to paint more and more prohibitive signs. Finally he decides to get out and find another small town, but first the No's have to be crossed out on all the signs. It is a pleasant book, but the author Jenny Wagner is in less dazzling form than she has shown before, particularly in her work with the artist Ron Brooks (notably in *Aranea* and *Rose and the Midnight Cat*).

*Rain* is a wordless book about two children playing outside on a wet day. There are a large number of pictures, of different sizes, from a couple of inches square to double page spreads, giving pace and rhythm. The children are obviously having a very good time splashing about in puddles and peering at all sorts of things which look different when they are wet. When they have had enough they go inside for a bath followed by supper and bed, and they wake the following morning to a fine day. The illustrations are straight-forward and homely, but they are often strangely lacking, perhaps because so little use is made of light as a dramatic ingredient. Some of

the pictures of the night, with the sky gradually clearing and dawn breaking are effective. But most of the rainy pictures look too bright, and as a result the "punchline" on the last page, the garden bathed in sun, falls entirely.

As in *Rain*, the illustrations in *The Flyaway Bird* consist of plain, realistic-looking people in line-and-wash, but here there are plenty of words. It is the story of a little girl whose bird escapes and who spends several days patiently searching for it. Although the pace is a little sluggish and one is aware that the text has been translated (particularly in the dialogue: would any child of seven or so use the word "why" in the sense, "why, that's just what I've always wanted"?), it is a nice story about everyday people.

*Jack and the Magic Stove* and *Molly Whuppie* are both traditional tales with the necessary ingredients of magic, princes and princesses and clever young peasants. *Jack and the Magic Stove* is retold by Elisabeth Beresford. It is illustrated by Rita van Bilsen, whose style is an intriguing blend of Chagall and Beryl Cook. *Molly Whuppie* is grandiosely told by Walter de la Mare, but what makes the book special is the illustrations by Errol le Cain: few illustrators can, as the mind's journey to magic places, the mysterious ritual and the strange logic of fairy tales. The first two pages set the tone: twilight, strange shadows, the unknown waiting to be explored.

*The Emperor's Plum Tree*, which tells the tale of a selfish emperor who learns wisdom and humility from a small child, is a handsome book. Both text (beautifully laid out) and illustrations exude stillness and timelessness: the colours subdued and the figures serene in posture, often dwarfed by enlarged blossom or strange shapes of gnarled trees. However the narrative is somewhat formal and sedate: in keeping with the presentation but perhaps lacking in appeal for children.

*Fearsome Fritz* is not sedate. This is a story of a boy who likes dressing up and who, disguised as a gorilla, goes into a gorilla cage, whereupon the real gorilla escapes, puts on the boy's clothes and goes home to tea. The story features many objects cracking, fat ladies in forever turning away, avoiding our eyes (like in the reflection of a mirror) or disappearing round corners or through doors. This book is obviously not for very young children, but I would push it determinedly in the direction of many older children who might consider themselves too old for picture books.

*Runtle the Pig* is a funny and sad story about a runt in a pig factory who

is saved and brought up by a family. While still small, the pig is a mixture of toy, pet and baby: he wears baby clothes and loves listening to stories, watching television and eating spaghetti seated at the table. But he grows into an adult pig and the tone darkens. No longer a jolly playmate, he becomes ugly and bad-tempered, finally lying about in the bath all day in a state of sulky depression. The family has just made the unhappy decision that the pig must be put down, when he makes a dash for freedom. At first he is alarmed by the smells and sounds of the outside world, but soon he finds a clump of trees, a potato field and a small lake. The family makes contact again and they agree to remain friends in their new set of circumstances. The ending is perhaps a little inconclusive. We leave the pig luxuriating in his new-found freedom, but it is difficult not to worry about how long it would be allowed to roam free, living off stolen potatoes. Despite the surreal touches (the pig wears his favourite blue nightcap at all times and is able to communicate in human speech), somehow we have been persuaded that this is a real pig in a real situation. Children will enjoy the funny, unsentimental pictures and may not reflect, as I did, how soon is childhood over and how little a pig has to look forward to.

O. Henry's short stories are not by themselves readily accessible to pre-teenage children. His urbane jests and consciously waggish style are an acquired taste, even in such a simple and optimistic tale as *The Gift of the Magi* with its message that sacrifice in love is in itself good and wise, however messy the outcome. But the sheer allure of this picture-book presentation could make it attractive to children as young as eight or nine. It is a remarkably beautiful book because of its very shape (unusually tall and slender), its smooth thick pages, its elaborately executed manuscript text, but above all because of Lisbeth Zwerger's exquisite illustrations in muted shades of grey and green. The oblique style of the pictures subtly mirrors the story; as O. Henry delicately skates round the issues of deliberately understating the dramatic climaxes, so Zwerger's characters are forever turning away, avoiding our eyes (like in the reflection of a mirror) or disappearing round corners or through doors. This book is obviously not for very young children, but I would push it determinedly in the direction of many older children who might consider themselves too old for picture books.

GEORGE SHANNON: *Dance Away*.  
Illustrated by José Aruego and Ariane Dewey.  
Julia MacRae, £4.95.  
0 86203 114 1

RON MARIS: *Better move on, Frog!*  
Julia MacRae, £4.95.  
0 86203 083 8

TAYO SHIMA: *The Night Express*.  
Illustrated by Taki Kitada.  
Dent, £4.25.  
0 460 06122 4

SUSAN MOXLEY: *Gardener George Goes to Town*.  
Hodder and Stoughton, £4.95.  
0 340 28622 9

BARBARA COONEY: *Miss Rumphius*.  
Julia MacRae, £4.95.  
0 86203 100 1

JENNY WAGNER: *Jo-Jo and Mike*.  
Illustrated by Ann James.  
Hamish Hamilton, £4.50.  
0 241 10906 X

PETER SPIER: *Rain*.  
Collins, £3.50.  
0 00 195165 3

ELISABETH BERESFORD: *Jack and the Magic Stove*.  
Illustrated by Rita van Bilsen.  
Hutchinson, £4.50.  
0 09 150530 5

EVA STALSJO: *The Flyaway Bird*.  
Methuen, £3.95.  
0 416 26240 6

WALTER DE LA MARE: *Molly Whuppie*.  
Illustrated by Errol le Cain.  
Faber, £4.95.  
0 571 11942 5

MICHELLE NIKLY: *The Emperor's Plum Tree*.  
Julia MacRae, £4.95.  
0 86203 089 7

JRANNE WILLIS: *The Tale of Fearome Fritz*.  
Illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain.  
Andersen, £3.95.  
0 86264 028 8

ULF NÄSSON: *Runtle the Pig*.  
Illustrated by Eva Eriksson.  
Methuen, £3.95.  
0 416 26350 X

O. HENRY: *The Gift of the Magi*.  
Illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger.  
Neugebauer Press, £4.95.  
0 507234 17 8

It has just been announced that the winner of the graphic prize at the Bologna Book Fair has been won by Roy Gerrard's *The Faverham* (Gollancz) which was reviewed in the TLS on September 30, 1982.



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Bologna Book Fair on 3rd March  
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## Prototypes

Frank Tuohy

ANITA DESAI  
The Village by the Sea  
157pp. Heinemann. £5.50.  
0 34 934364

Founded on fact, *The Village by the Sea* is a beautifully observed account of a poor family living on the coast quite near Bombay. Till now the wealth of the village has depended on fishing, but the future of its inhabitants is threatened by industrial development. Modernization will do little to help them because they are too backward and illiterate to benefit from it. The factories will destroy the natural world, always a magnificently insistent presence in India.

Anita Desai's evocation of the flat shores, the palm-trees, the fishing boats drawn up with their meagre catch is admirable - even though the descriptions at times seem to be somewhat deodorized and tidied up for junior readers or foreign consumption. I wonder, though, how much the names of tropical birds and plants can mean to those who have never seen them. Joseph Conrad, after all, managed to evoke much the same sort of scenery without being able to give a name to the individual elements that composed it.

It is, however, the human beings who are at the centre of the picture: thirteen-year old Lila, almost the sole support of her sick mother and drunken father, and Hari, her twelve-year old brother who, following a protest meeting as far as Bombay, stays there in order to seek his fortune. He falls among people of extreme poverty, who treat him well, and learns how to mend watches, which may be the beginning of a trade for him. Meanwhile in the village the rich de-

Silvas, who are Christians, take Lila to work for them. They find Lila's mother a place in the local hospital, where she soon recovers her health. The father, too, undergoes a sudden conversion and gives up drinking.

If a story is based on facts, the facts themselves will probably have come to notice because of their resemblance to fiction. Nowadays it is a commonplace to find points of similarity between Indian life, at home and abroad, and the world of Victorian England: reliance on self-help and hard work, family loyalties and the subordination of individual desires. There are survivals too of a hierarchical society. Not surprisingly, therefore, several of Anita Desai's characters seem to have prototypes among the more benevolent personages in Dickens: no unreformed Scrooges, but Mr de Silva is definitely a Cheeryble. The children are an exception, being treated without sentimentality. Sayid Ali, however, the birdwatcher who takes the de Silvas' house during the monsoon, turns out to be something of a Skimpole. In the end he is the subject of another sudden conversion, renouncing his own reverence for the natural world and telling Hari to welcome the changes that are coming. "You will give up your traditional way of living . . . You will survive."

This summary dismissal of one of the principal themes of the story - a theme, moreover, which has seemed central to Indian civilization since the days of Gandhi - points to what must be considered a deficiency. These Dickensian characters fail to get involved in anything like a Dickensian intrigue. *The Village by the Sea* is too light in touch, too desultory to involve its readers very deeply. What we have is a series of beautiful pictures and character sketches, which illustrate the passing of time but hardly cohere into a story.

## Innermost doubts

Nicholas Tucker

LIZ BERRY  
Easy Connections  
Gollancz. £5.95.  
0 575 03245 6

Her heart seemed to turn over. She closed her eyelids to shut out the hot darkness of his eyes. He bent his head and kissed her on the mouth. He looked at her, his eye wide open and defenceless, the hurt showing. Then he slapped her across the mouth, hard, cutting her lip. Blood trickled down her chin. She made no effort to wipe it away. Her eyes filled with tears.

Not extracts from a Mills and Boon product, nor something lifted from a teenage love comic. They both come from *Easy Connections*, a first novel from a publisher hitherto possessing one of the best children's lists in the country. This particular book, however, introduces a dimension into current arguments about novels for young people unfamiliar since the great days of Enid Blyton: sheer badness. For if the most immature, narcissistic, deluded young adult could ever write a novel, it would surely be very like this one. It concerns Cathy, a seventeen year old artist-genius, in whose lovely face colour mounts and

drains away as monotonously as water in a choked drain. She is raped in the first chapter by Dev, a millionaire pop singer, and the rest of the story describes how he then finds he needs her after all ("Cathy, I'm not just a picture in the newspaper. I'm real, I'm a human being.") These attentions are not always welcome ("Please Dev, go away. Leave me alone. Let me get on with my life.") But in the end he and Cathy get married all right, and must certainly have made a handsome pair, since both are described as beautiful in the extreme.

The nearest equivalents to *Easy Connections* are those tabloid comics where teenage characters mouthe clichés to each other about love, life and the difficulties in finding the right fella. In place of the conventions of the romantic picture strip, however, there are various well-tried prose substitutes. When Cathy is moved, her hands tremble wildly and she hesitates at the beginning of certain sentences ("But why?" or "Where are we going?") When she is really upset, (something that happens very frequently) she goes "paper-white", cold feelings run up and down her spine, and her knees turn either to water or jelly or, in one particular paragraph, both. Such instant descriptions are usually followed by a snatch of dialogue and then a convenient summary of the state of

emotions to date ("She looked at him with hatred. Hating his calm assurance that he had only to make a decision, and everybody would get into line. Hating his lack of remorse. Hating his . . . etc etc") And just to ram home the point even further, characters are untidily self-revelatory about their innermost fears, hopes and doubts, articulating their innermost introspections as unselfconsciously as any soliloquizing actor on the Elizabethan stage.

This way, today's new young Elizabethans will also have no trouble in following this banal fantasy, while some may even be moderately piqued by it. I doubt, though, whether the "young adult" will be willing to pay £5.95 for something they could buy at a tenth of that price in one of the story series on sale at local newsagents. It is the hard-pressed school and public library, therefore, that still seems the main client in mind here in that search for the ever-elusive teenage novel that will charm even the most reluctant reader from the trees. But the price, £5.95, is too high, and the book, not just in terms of cost, today's publishers, struggling to maintain a penny-pinching environment, have a difficult job to do, but the answer cannot be to produce books like *Easy Connections*, at least if young readers are ever to know what real literature is all about.

## A sense of history

Geoffrey Trease

WINIFRED FINLAY  
Secret Rooms and Hiding Places  
Kaye and Ward. £4.95.  
0 7182 2581 3

With a topic of such perennial fascination to the young, and her own long experience as a storyteller, Mrs Finlay could hardly fail to produce a readable book. She offers, in effect, nine short stories, each based on fact and set in actual places, some of which survive and can be visited, though reconstruction has often obliterated the part that a child would be most anxious to see. There is variety in period, from the late fifteenth century at Minster Lovell to an early Victorian smuggling episode at Fowey, and in geographical distribution as far north as Prince Charles's Highland hide-out at Cluny's Castle. There are Jesuits and Jacobites and Cavalier fugitives, two from the debacle at Worcester alone.

The marriage of fact and fiction, though it has contributed much to children's literature, is like other marriages not without problems and jarring discords. Mrs Finlay indicates in her brief linking notes when she has

been able to work from a contemporary record, though she gives no explicit help to those modern school-children who are trained to "look things up", and sometimes even want to. Such children - judged at least by the letters they write to authors - are keen to know just where they stand. Is this bit really true? How do we know what he said and she felt? Whether from a genuine passion for historical truth, or merely with an anxious eye on their own school progress, they seem to have an almost Victorian desire to justify their entertainment with a sense that they have also been edified. This goes with the emphasis on projects, and the proliferation in late years of superb non-fiction books, so that Mrs Finlay's traditional approach, with its invented dialogue and incidents, and guesswork to bridge the awkward gaps in the documentation, is less acceptable than it would have been a generation ago.

She writes, too, in that elevated tone which was once thought proper for the description of anything, however trivial, that belongs to bygone days. A soldier "elects" to guard a particular window, he doesn't just choose to. The servants do not show "open" distrust, it has to be "overt". Nobody wants to impoverish the vocabulary of children's literature. The wild and

strange and musical word delights the young reader, is roughly approached from the context, and makes an invaluable, if unobtrusive, contribution to his education. But simplicity has its own virtue, and as time when children are said to be swinging away from historical books the author is digging his own grave. He creates verbal difficulties without compensating artistic gain. This is a book in which candour gives place to distasteful and mostly unhelpful, and in which the sentences so long and heavy with subordinate clauses that the dialogue becomes, in an actor's sense, unspeakable. In these words, however, the book is a blend not so much of fact and fiction as of fact and fantasy. Undoubtedly there are children who still like lushery, but discursive calculation should not dismiss it critic.

There is a lot of useful stuff in these pages. General historical explanation might have been clearer, and the stories might helpfully have been in chronological order. We could have had a few more of the (known, and intriguing) practical details about constructing secret rooms, and more about that remarkable craftsman-martyr, Nicholas Owen.

## Torn apart

Tony Bradman

JAN NEEDLE  
Piggy in the Middle  
Deutsch. £3.95.  
0 233 97481 4

Jan Needle is an exciting writer and a prolific one too, having now published over eleven books since 1977 (including a picture book). *Piggy in the Middle* is not one of his best but it is a slightly sub-standard Needle is still sharp enough to prick the conscience and inject some serious thinking into the system.

The book tells the story of Sandra Patterson, a cadet policewoman in a south coast town racked (I use the word advisedly; newspaper hacks and their inflammatory headlines play their part in the novel too) by racial tension. Her problem is that she is confused, as the jacket illustration so winsomely demonstrates (Sandra, with her police hat off, wipes her brow in a scene of urban desolation).

Sandra is confused by her police colleagues, many of whom seem to be

openly hostile to "Asians". She is confused by her boyfriend, David, a young reporter who sees a racial angle in almost every story and being a concerned white liberal spends a lot of time trying to ingratiate himself with the immigrant community. Most of all she is confused by her relationship with Brian, a large, handsome policeman with right-wing views and a penchant for random violence. A murder is committed, and an Asian boy is accused. Sandra is involved in the investigation; David is out for a scoop. Soon everything falls apart as organizations from opposite sides of the fence move in, marches are broken up by National Front thugs and heads get broken.

Jan Needle tells a good story, and it is a measure of how a children's books have come that the "good" copper can say of a remand centre: "Another strand in the rich fabric of British injustice. . . It looks like a prison camp. . . A concentration camp. Despicable." But Jan Needle is enough of a realist (in attitude, as well as style) to show us that we are all "piggies in the middle", even the police. "The rot starts at the top", says one character. And all of us below

suffer, policemen, journalists, Asians and Sandra.

As a novel, *Piggy in the Middle* has its problems. Cramming sex, violence, prejudice, an inside look at the police and newspapers and all the rest into 154 pages makes the plot read like a time to time and leaves the reader little breathless. There is also a heavy dose of let-down at the end, after the end of the book, when Sandra goes to the police and drifts off into some study of politics and history. But this is no condemnation of the novel. In Needle's writing, this is a contemporary dialogue is finally broken and his books are appreciated enough for any teenager who would like to see a little more deeply into the world.

*Early Children's Books: A Collector's Guide* by Eric Quayle (256pp. Heinemann. £14.95. 0 7153 001 1) is a book of the same kind. The author, who is a book collector and bibliographer, goes on to provide a general guide to the acquisition of children's books, giving details of genres and valuable, well-illustrated and unillustrated books.

## The school of life

Jennifer Moody

LOIS DUNCAN  
Stranger with My Face  
Hamish Hamilton. £5.50.  
0 241 10913 2

JOHN BRANFIELD  
New Cow  
Gollancz. £5.95.  
0 575 03245 5

Both Lois Duncan and John Branfield have taken the bottle-neck period of the late teens as the subject for their latest novels.

Miss Duncan can always be relied upon to get her narrative off to a promising start. Within two pages of beginning *Stranger with My Face* she has outlined her main characters and their setting, and is leaping into the plot. The story is set in a small town in New England, where a science fiction writer and a painter, becomes aware of a dark presence in her home, a soul, who moves insidiously in on Laurie's life. This soul, Lia, is Laurie's double. Lia is adopted as a tiny baby, while her identical twin Lia was placed elsewhere. Lia has become as depraved, indeed murderous, as Laurie is settled and balanced. With the help of two friends, Helen and Jeff, Laurie learns to develop in herself the skill that Lia has already perfected, that of projecting her spirit outside her body. And it is only through the affection of Jeff and of Laurie's little sister, Megan, that Lia's attempt to possess herself of Laurie's body and, by extension, satisfactory life-style, is defeated.

The author has written several highly readable novels but it cannot be said that *Stranger with My Face* has the same stature. In the past, Miss Duncan has depicted her heroine living in a pleasant and uncomplicated setting, with a personal moral dilemma of real depth, the solution of which has required, and indeed justified, her honest and upright character. This dilemma is lacking here. There is also much emphasis on the scientific "evidence of astral projection", which puts a stop to what at one stage

looks like a promising study of duality in human nature. The Laurie/Lia theme is matched by the physical disfigurement of Jeff in a road accident, which leaves him still handsome when seen from one angle and hideous when viewed from another. It is probably because of this lack of a moral acid test that few of Miss Duncan's characters here achieve the clarity and distinctiveness that are usual in her work, although there is a pleasant quality in her evocation of Laurie's family life, and some shrewd observations of teenage dating and social jockeying. But none of this is enough to elevate this novel above the level of a competently told tale.

Mr Branfield, on the other hand, moves with deliberation into the development of his theme. Invariably setting his earlier novels in Cornwall, he has placed the action of *Brown Cow* in Yorkshire. His hero, Andy, is however a Cornishman with a Cornish name, Trewin and he returns in the summer holidays for a brief interlude in his much loved native county. Back in Yorkshire, he moves through the sixth form of his authoritarian day school, Bywaters, groping experimentally with tall, academic Dorothy and plump, self-possessed Gloria, permuting himself to be groomed for a Cambridge scholarship, enjoying the friendship of ambiguous adults and taking on the headship of his school with shoulder-shrugging resignation. That he feels an outsider among his fellows is epitomized by the way his surname is perpetually anglicized from Trewin into Trewin.

The period the author has chosen is immediately after the end of the Second World War. He fails to capture that dreary time of shortages and exhortations, apart from a few references to coupons and to teachers returning from the Services. There are several well sketched vignettes in the characterization, notably ex-airman returned teacher, Bomber Carrington (Bummer to the boarders) who helps Andy to see himself as Cambridge material, and a histrionic local journalist, Duncan Smith, who sharpens Andy's appreciation of drama. But all in all it must be said that which is, I suspect, how Mr Branfield feels about anywhere that is not Cornwall.

## A gap in time

Dominic Hibberd

PETER HUNT  
The Maps of Time  
Johanna MacRae. £5.95.  
0 8023 119 2

Peter Hunt sets a fascinating time puzzle in this book. A few final clues define it but it is an absorbing read. A curate, four teenagers and eleven-year-old Sam cycle into Hay-on-Wye for a camping holiday: an arm is raised and they are hit by a violent storm. So we have a good start - mystery, instant action and a splendid detective. Then there are bookshops, a map of which (Hunt's elliptical time to time and leaves the reader breathless. There is also a heavy dose of let-down at the end, after the end of the book, when Sandra goes to the police and drifts off into some study of politics and history. But this is no condemnation of the novel. In Needle's writing, this is a contemporary dialogue is finally broken and his books are appreciated enough for any teenager who would like to see a little more deeply into the world.

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If you enter transmuted ground, you find yourself in a complete but lifeless Victorian world (a little idealized, I think). The people who were living there have already continued into their futures. If you are already in a place which Sam endures, you are released from real time into your own and things happen as you imagine them. A third quality occurs when a circle is not drawn, though the gap and Sam follows it back into 1860. Leaving now, he comes back with his earlier self and

## The animals' revolt

Alan Brownjohn

NICHOLAS FISK  
On the Flip Side  
Kestrel. £5.25.  
0 7226 5825 7

The Rideouts are a family of cheerful incompatibles - father a harassed science correspondent, mother withdrawn into jumble sales and good causes, Lucas a charming fourth-form dilettante who is unlikely to produce what the examiners want. And twelve-year old Lettice? Lettice is the oddest of all, a bright child who talks to animals and obtains answers, answers of alarming import for the world at large. This bawdy household is well-drawn in the early pages of Nicholas Fisk's new science fiction tale, but Lettice's bizarre talent soon overwhelms all other interest, not least the author's interest in what she might be, apart from the recipient of extraordinary communications from an animal kingdom. Should we, and "young readers", want any more characterization than this, any more

human interest, any more warmth about people trapped in a technological nightmare? If we do, it does not come in *On the Flip Side*, as the plot line races away into first a jaunty, then a decidedly creepy, fantasy about the arrival of the Blobs.

The Blobs are a malicious emanation from our own television screens, materialized patterns of lines which emerge to batter human beings for their ecological irresponsibility. The animals sense them first, and Lettice is the one girl in the world who knows why it is the animals have everywhere started to look scared, hissing or grunting at invisible forces, turning against men. Lettice can read the signs, but cannot prevent the animals' revolt, as pigs trample long-distance lorries, drivers, dogs form packs and attack villages, rats swarm over the cities. Mr Fisk contrives some eerie and repellent moments with the rats, and some brisk sideswipes at the media (the television scientist, the chat show compère whose eyes glitter with "warmth, interest, and a sort of knowing inner depth of ruthlessness and self-love"). And two-thirds of the way into escalating chaos and confusion - although some

seems to go on with comparative normality for the purposes of the plot, and no governments actually declare a State of Emergency - we wonder how he is going to bring the world out of it.

The animals, of course, are the first to discover an answer: the cat takes a simple step sideways into a world where the technology has not been invented; or has somehow been invented. You vanish into it by believing that you can, and one by one the stricken members of the human race also take the step. The ecological message of *On the Flip Side* is powerful in intention, and yet muffled in delivery. What will readers make of the weird pre-industrial, or post-industrial, world in which the Rideouts, and the rest of mankind, find themselves on the other side? This racy fable has faltered in its denouement, although - like technological mankind perhaps - Mr Fisk's human beings have put themselves in a predicament for which no clear and obvious solution looks possible. The novel is fast, in places unusually delicate in the midst of some standard sci-fi simplification; and finally more than a little ambiguous.

## The presence of the past

Colin Greenland

KENNETH LILLINGTON  
What Beckoning Ghost?  
Faber. £5.25.  
0 571 11599 X

EDWARD CHITHAM  
Ghost in the Water  
Kestrel. £4.95.  
0 7226 6471 0

Although children's fiction history has a major contribution to make to education for sexual equality, the supposition that sex determines reading preferences remains entrenched. As far as that goes, there are no presumably books for girls. Emma Nash in *What Beckoning Ghost?* and Teresa Willets in *Ghost in the Water* are two young heroines strong in the intuitive and emotional generosity which are traditionally celebrated as female virtues in girls' fiction. Neither of them shows much inclination to challenge the sexist values of the societies they are inhabiting (middle-class Dorset and working-class Birmingham respectively). Encouragingly, however, there is no suggestion that their experience as girls is in any way closed or foreign to the male understanding, because they are the creations of two male authors, and very successful ones too. Their stories might be confidently recommended to any imaginative young teenager - except, strange as this may seem, fans of the ghost tale proper. Neither Lillington nor Chitham writes to entice incontinent devotees to the delights of the fleshless. They seek neither to thrill nor to chill, just as both Emma and Teresa realize that screaming and fainting are an inadequate response to a ghost, which affords such winning social history project. Each apparition proves to be a woman who died young, troubled by the sexual conventions and constraints of her time. There is plenty to fascinate an investigator at Marland Hall, as at Wright's canal bridge.

Emma Nash's subject is, she discovers, Emmeline Trimble, eldest daughter of an eighteenth-century servant family at the stately home where Emma now has a summer job serving teas. Emma, supposedly overwrought, is staying with her aunt in Marland to recuperate from the mental strain of O levels, so it is a little surprising how easily she recruits allies for her supernatural quest. Everyone is enthusiastically supportive, from Mrs Maybury, Emma's colleague in the tearoom, to Mr Stanhope the village antique dealer, who cheerfully closes his shop to ferret through documents and examine portraits for her. Emma's Auntie Di is the sort of gem who smiles indulgently when her charge comes in at three in the morning, covered in perspiration, looking as if she has just escaped from a ghost. The ghost, however, is only too pleased to pop back to Marland Hall for the midnight séance Emma suggests. The council lends her grave-diggers, the press give sympathetic publicity. Thus deprived of all possible plot tension, *What Beckoning Ghost?* would collapse into banality were it not for a repeated configuration that makes shrewd sense of Emmeline's plight and the whole notion of recurrence, ghostly or otherwise. The theme is the inextinguishability of generations, the specific motif the battle of ambitious mothers and stubborn daughters. Many of his intended readers may indeed feel that it is the only battle in the world, but to be honest Lillington really should have reminded them there will be others.

The presence of the past is more convincingly conveyed in *Ghost in the Water*. "Once a thing happens, it makes a sort of bump in things, and you can't iron the bump out", muses Teresa Willets. The past goes on flowering, like gorse: "You can divide it, and dig coal and limestone all round it, you can build houses all over it, but you can't kill it." Abigail Parkes, the mine-owner's daughter, killed herself for love on December 10 1860, but the relics of her life keep turning up in Teresa's life. The more Teresa reconstructs the more fragments she discovers, and the more she suspects that Abigail's death was not suicide. While Abigail confines her appearances to reveries and dreams, unauthenticated until a final dramatic and unambiguous manifestation, Chitham (unlike Lillington) allows that Teresa's visions may be wholly valid. In this way he

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The Book Marketing Council is organizing three weeks of special promotions of children's books. The campaign is titled "The Magic World of Picture Books" and is intended to reach parents via the book trade. The twenty titles chosen for the promotion include: Kit Williams: *Maskerade* (Cape), Shirley Hughes: *Alfie Gets in First* (Fontana), Iris Schwitter: *Hilda's Restful Chair* (Fontana), Graham Oakley: *The Church Mouse at Macmillan*, Jill Murray: *Peas at Macmillan*, Tomi Ungerer: *The Last* (Macmillan), Tomi Ungerer: *The*

not only scores points for psychological realism, but also makes the ghost a metaphor for history itself, like the contours of the past that an imaginative eye can trace through the housing estates and industrial yards of the present. The eye in *Ghost in the Water* is Teresa's, an outgoing, unpretentious Black Country girl who sees things in plain, strong colours and describes them in language as lively and direct as she is herself. Her imagination is to be trusted, as is her author's.

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Michael Hyndman

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FROM HAMISH HAMILTON CHILDREN'S BOOKS



# Zip the Chip: computer books for children

Harvey Mellor

Cheap personal microcomputers are selling at a tremendous rate, certainly faster than the manufacturers can produce them. Many of these machines are being bought for children, though their parents are often the ones eager to gain access to the much vaunted new information technology.

Having got the machine home and spent a few weeks playing the standard games, most children then want to explore further since they have heard such weird and wondrous tales of what computers can do. Computers have quite definitely not reached the degree of consumer-oriented sophistication that would encourage you to believe the cat could operate one, so parents turn for help to the manuals that came with the machine, only to discover that it is badly written and almost unintelligible to the technologically hard of hearing. Even the best manuals are unsuitable for children.

It is to these children and their parents that the Usborne series of books are addressed. They are all very clearly written and brightly and interestingly illustrated, a ten year old would be able to read them with pleasure and yet older children and adults will not find them beneath them.

Understanding the Micro begins at the very simplest level by describing how to connect up a micro to a television and a tape recorder and goes on to describe the major parts of a micro and how they work, what micros are used for, what programming (in BASIC) looks like, and how to expand a simple microcomputer system. The section on programming is the weakest part of this book and two of the programs have errors that prevent them from working correctly. The book concludes with a buyer's guide to the major personal computers available, though several other good machines have come onto the market since this was written. This book gives a good idea of what is involved in using a micro, and so might well be consulted before buying one. A better educational practice, however, would be to use computers before trying to understand how they work.

Introduction to Computer Programming sets out to teach the programming language BASIC, the commonest programming language on small computers. It is an introduction to the elementary concepts rather than a full exposition of the language, and as such it succeeds very well. The versions of BASIC on different machines vary, so the author sticks to common ground where possible, pointing out the changes needed for widely available computers. This approach does mean that every user will have to do some translation in order to make the programs work on their machine. Users of BBC BASIC will find that the better features of this version, are ignored, and that they are asked to learn techniques that they would have been better off without. Programming is taught through simple, example

programs, together with small program puzzles and suggestions for programs to write (solutions are provided). The examples include simple games, graphs, and a funny poem program. A very useful feature of the program listings is that notes are printed alongside the program outlining the purpose of each part and explaining how it works. The book includes a section on graphics, and a couple of pages on finding bugs (ie, errors) in programs.

Computer Spacegames and Computer Battles are each contain about a dozen simple games written in BASIC for the ZX 81 together with detailed lists of amendments for various other machines (at least one of these listings contains misprints, however). The games are all very simple and are variations on familiar themes. In each book there is one slightly more complicated game using some simple graphics and in this case the program for each machine is presented in full. The visual presentation of the books is very impressive with the result that the games are likely to come as something of a disappointment by comparison. These books are not intended to be treated simply as collections of games to be typed in, but rather as worked examples to copy and amend and thus learn from. The program listings are presented with the same kind of detailed notes as those in *Introduction to Computer Programming*, and a novice programmer will be able to learn a lot from studying them. Puzzles are presented to encourage exploration.

These books all teach BASIC because it is the standard language on micros today, but it does have its opponents: one prominent academic claims that it is almost impossible to teach good programming to students who have learnt to program in BASIC. There are alternative languages, one beginning to find favour in schools is LOGO and with this language elementary programming can become more academically respectable, more interesting and easier to learn.

Many children's first contact with computers is through games, and for these children the *Usborne Guide to Computer and Video Games* will make fascinating reading. There is a description of the major types of games machines, explanations of how they work, a history of computer games, forecasts of what is to come, and hints on how to play the more popular games, though games addicts will find few revelations here. The history of games goes back to the pioneer days of television games in 1972, and the invention of Space Invaders in 1978; really old people may actually remember these events.

The sudden explosion in sales of the microcomputer today happened to the calculator some years ago, yet few children understand how calculators work, or can use them correctly so *The Usborne Pocket Calculator Book* could be very useful. After describing the mechanics of a calculator the book runs over the purposes of the common keys giving a wide variety of questions and

puzzles that involve using a calculator. The questions are interestingly presented with lots of bright pictures but this section is little more than a cleverly disguised arithmetic text book. Later sections deal with trigonometry, statistics, and permutations but no one is likely to learn trigonometry, for example, from one page of a book however nicely illustrated. Many for whom the earlier sections are useful will have little use for these later sections, except perhaps as a demonstration that all those other funny keys on their calculators do have some purpose. This book would be most useful to those who have just begun to use a calculator seriously in their school work, say twelve year olds.

The final three books are aimed at a more general understanding of computers and their place in society. *Computers* covers the whole field of computing but its strength lies in its treatment of peripherals and applications, and these two areas are particularly well illustrated with photographs. The explanations are not very thorough, indeed many of them are simply commentaries on the illustrations around which the text is built, and the book has too many examples of computers, nevertheless it would be a useful addition to the library of a twelve to fourteen year old, and a good accompaniment to a school course for this age group because of the illustrations. *Sam's System* is clearly aimed at much younger readers, say seven year olds. It is the story of a curious little boy (Sam) and his introduction to TAK the terminal, Pandora the processor, Polly the printer (who is described as having a bright little face), Sid and the Software, and Zip the Chip. A longish chapter on binary seems out of place, but the section on Software is very well

done. This book will put off more parents and children than it encourages, but if the image of Zip and the Bits singing

Processors large, chippy chippy  
Systems small,  
All Systems Go, chippy chippy  
Using us all  
appeals to you then this is for you.

Alone among the nine books reviewed *Microprocessors Today* is prepared to suggest that computers may not be a total blessing. After a thorough account of the history of computing and information processing, and a description of the present state of the technology and its applications there is a discussion of

some of the effects computers are having on society, and an excellent chapter on robots and intelligent machines. Problems discussed include privacy, unemployment, computer crime, and links between the development of computing and the military, but there is no discussion of the computer myth itself, the effect of computers on third world economies, the differential effect of computers on the employment of women. This book is aimed at older students, fifteen or over, and besides its appeal to a general readership its treatment of social implications could well be recommended to students of Computer Science at O and A level, since this area is covered rather sketchily in the popular text books.

JUDY TATCHELL and BILL BENNETT: *Usborne Guide to Understanding the Micro: How it works and what it can do.*

Usborne. £1.65.  
0 86020 637 8

BRIAN REFFIN SMITH: *Introduction to Computer Programming: basic for beginners.*

Usborne. £1.65.  
0 86020 674 2

DANIEL ISAAMAN and JENNY TYLER: *Computer Spacegames: for ZX Spectrum, ZX81, BBC, TRS-80, Apple, Vic & Pet.*

Usborne. £1.99.  
0 86020 683 1

DANIEL ISAAMAN and JENNY TYLER: *Computer Battles: for ZX Spectrum, ZX81, BBC, TRS-80, Apple, Vic & Pet.*

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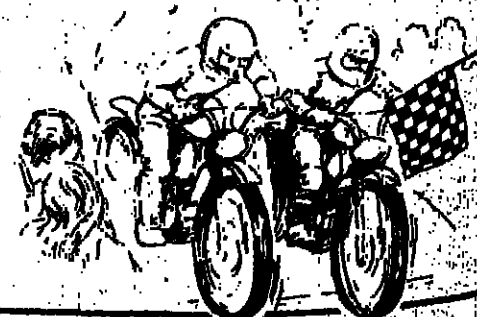
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## commentary

### Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

In the week when twenty youngish writers are launched on a two week promotional campaign as the "Best of Young British Novelists" it seems right to return to a question raised in "Behind the lines" a month ago, but overlooked in the heat of argument over the inactivities of the Arts Council Literature Department.

Michael Church's criticisms of the Arts Council's literature policy introduced a far broader issue: is it not possible that the attention paid to fiction and poetry (in the balance of Arts Council policy, but also by such extension in the bellyhood of such promotion) is disproportionate to the literary achievement of these genres? Does not the true excellence of contemporary British letters lie in biography, criticism, history and other forms of literature that are so negatively categorized as non-fiction?

At least one of the Young British Novelists appears to think so. A. N. Wilson has had some extremely derogatory remarks about his fellow writers reported in the February issue of *Hogwarts and Queen*. When I asked him about them he explained that the reporter who interviewed him had made them up, but he does feel that contemporary non-fiction, rather than what will survive into the next century in a hundred years' time, people might remember my life of fiction, but I suspect that they will have forgotten my novels.

A. N. Wilson and his nineteen colleagues were their current marketing agent to Michael Holroyd, who served as the chief literary editor. (He is also Vice-Chairman of the Arts Council Literature Panel). He is sympathetic to Michael Church's view. To exclude historians or biographers or philosophers from the definition of literature would be to exclude Johnson, Gibbon, Carlyle... To a certain extent the division is an artificial one. Thomas Kenally's *Scholar's Ark*, for instance, won the Booker Prize for fiction. People misunderstand what the category non-fiction is. Both Marx and Freud have shaped our perception of the world by appealing to the imagination.

Holroyd admits that as a non-fiction writer himself he may have a subconscious bias. He is concerned not to go to such to raise non-fiction above imaginative writing as to secure its proper recognition. Was it then cultural snobbery that defined the pecking order? There is a rather pompous attitude, non-fiction, where history or biography are regarded simply as means of information retrieval. The notion that biography is simply an assemblage of facts is certainly not what I'm about.

The question of the relative value of the genres is more than a matter of literary jealousy. There is the real question of the amount of subsidy and promotion each receives - and the amount of critical attention should be given by the press. Fiction writers have long complained that novels do not get the space they deserve in the review pages, whereas non-fiction is covered to excess. A. N. Wilson, who is also Literary Editor of the *Spectator*, disputes this. "I rarely come across a good novel that has been overlooked, whereas quite often a work of non-fiction can be. The amount of non-fiction that is rejected for review as opposed to fiction is greater." Claire Tomlin, Literary Editor of *The Sunday Times* rejects the suggestion that insufficient fiction is being reviewed. "We have been reviewing fiction very seriously indeed. There is a great return to fiction, while there has been a surge of over-production of biography. Fiction matters much more, it is nearer to poetry and is likely to be more enduring."

This compliment to the status of poetry would please Alan Brownjohn, Chairman of the Poetry Society, but he does not hide a fairly narrow

literary circle poetry is not acknowledged either. "Poetry is the Cinderella as far as public attention is concerned, though everybody is writing poetry and putting it in drawers. It's a great hidden activity. The surface attitude of the media is either sneering or patronizing."

Alan Brownjohn feels that British poetry is going through a particularly creative period, and for that reason is worthy of support. Michael Holroyd points out that while such works as Richard Ellmann's biography of James Joyce create the impression that we have been experiencing "a golden age" of non-fiction literature, the economic tide is turning against the genre. Biographies and histories cost too much to produce, and do not have the prospect of appearing in paperback. Such protestations would probably not impress the Young British Novelists, of whom few, if any, can live by writing fiction alone. In passing, Michael Holroyd offered a note of reconciliation: "The reason I read so much fiction is in order to learn how to write biography; most novelists read non-fiction in order to be able to be better novelists."

Now that the natural injustice done to writers by a free library service has been at least nominally ended by the institution of Public Lending Right, writers and publishers have turned their attention to the actual injustice being done by the vast amounts of illegal photocopying carried out in educational establishments at every level, from primary school to university.

The Authors' Licensing and Copyright Society and the Publishers' Licensing Society have joined forces to set up the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd. The Agency will offer licences to local authorities and educational establishments which will allow them to make multiple photocopies in exchange for a fee. The money will then be divided between the authors and the publishers of photocopied material.

There is no doubt that in law multiple photocopying is illegal, but it has become so much a feature of the educational economy (particularly with the cutbacks in book-buying) that it is difficult to see why the photocopyers should agree to buy voluntary licences from what is in fact a private company. None the less, the Copyright Licensing Agency has opened negotiations both with the representative organizations of the local authorities and with the

Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

Of the two groups, the universities seem the more reluctant. They do not concede that multiple photocopying goes on, and point out that the photocopying in their libraries is strictly controlled. The real problem, however, lies in the photocopying being done by individual departments. I asked the chairman of the ALCS, Maureen Duffy, how they hoped to get anywhere. "At the moment the law is being broken, and these people know it. We are therefore offering them a way of dealing with that. We know that a great deal of multiple photocopying is going on in university departments, and we have the evidence."

The implication is that if there is no progress it might be necessary to follow the example of the Music Publishers' Association, who have successfully prosecuted a public school and a local education authority for illegal photocopying. At the moment talks are still at an early stage, but the Copyright Licensing Agency hopes to have a scheme under way by the start of the next academic year. In the meantime, the intellectual property of thousands is being stolen every day.

Readers who are curious to discover whether American novelist Jerzy Kosinski really does exist (see "Behind the lines", July 16, 1982, and "American notes", December 10, 1982) will be able to see him in the flesh at International PEN's Writers' Day at the Purcell Room on March 19.

Kosinski will be lecturing on "Self versus public: Controversy or Conviction". The title more than hints that he will be reflecting on the controversy stirred up by the *Village Voice*, which suggested that Kosinski did not write his own novels, and that the books he did write were subsidized by the CIA. The dispute has obscured his reputation as a dynamic President of American PEN.

The other lecturer is also familiar with controversy. D. M. Thomas will be speaking on "The Poet as Novelist". After lunch and the presentation of the Silver PEN Award and the J. R. Ackerley Prize for Autobiography, the lecturers will be joined for discussion with questions by Marghanita Laski and the General Secretary of International PEN, Alexander Blok. This pen-name is Jerzy Blot. This opportunity for audience participation replaces the "entertainment" of last year, but the choice of lecturers holds out hope for an entertaining afternoon. Tickets can be had from PEN, 7 Dilke Street, London SW3 4JB.

### Author, Author

#### Competition No 111

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office no later than March 18. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 111" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priority House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 25.

1 The floor was well-worn red brick, and on the wide hearth burnt a fire of logs, between two attractive chimney corners tucked away in the wall, well out of any suspicion of draught. A couple of high-backed settles, facing each other on either side of the fire, gave further sitting accommodation for the sociably disposed. In the middle of the room stood a long table of plain boards placed on trestles, with benches down each side.

2 "Not but that it's a grand big place in a gloomy way... The house is six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor, and there's near a hundred rooms in it, though most of them's shut up and locked. And there's

pictures and fine old furniture and things that's been there for ages... 3 They were just ordinary suburban children, and they lived with their Father and Mother in an ordinary red-brick-fronted villa, with coloured glass in the door, a tiled passage that was called a hall, a bath-room with hot and cold water, electric bells, french windows, and a good deal of white paint, and "every modern convenience", as the house-agent says.

Competition No 107  
Winner: Miss C. Easterbrook  
Answers:

1 Let's to billiards.  
Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, v.  
2 Clash went the billiard balls in the Clerkenwell Social Saloon.  
John Betjeman, "Clash went the billiard balls".  
3 The billiard sharp whom anyone catches.  
His doom's extremely hard:  
He's made to dwell  
In a prison cell  
On a spot that's always barred;  
And there he plays extravagant matches  
In fitness finger-stalls.  
On a cloth untied:  
With a twisted cue  
And elliptical billiard balls!  
W. S. Gilbert, *The Mikado*, Act II.

### Well read

Jonathan Keates

British Opera, 1876-1914  
St John's Smith Square

Visiting the elephants' graveyards and Bermuda Triangles of music is a magnetically dismal experience, more especially in the case of nineteenth and early twentieth-century composers writing for large orchestras because of the sense of wasted energy conveyed by their scores. A concert devoted entirely to the world of late Victorian and Edwardian opera thus holds all the ghoulies fascination of Highgate Cemetery or the Vault of the Capuchins at Palermo.

They tried so very hard, did Arthur Goring Thomas and Frederick Corder and Edward Naylor, and were sometimes nearly rather good at it. Sir Frederick Hymen Cowen was not quite so very good at it, and it seemed a pity that his "Dear Prince, thy ring shall ever be" from *Pauline* (1876), a forgettable morsel of pinchbeck operetta, should have been included when, for reasons not made clear, sections from *Junho*, Sullivan's 1890 attempt at the grand manner, were suddenly excised.

After hearing Quasimodo's aria "What would I do for my Queen" from Goring Thomas's *Emmerdale* (1883) it was not hard to see why the composer himself ended in despondency and madness. If you go on pretending to be Gounod people who know you aren't will stop taking you seriously. Sir Alexander Mackenzie did the same thing much better in his raucous *Colomba* prelude with which the concert began, one of very few pieces of any glow amid the numbing opacity of the music. The last of the evening, d'Erlanger, a naturalized Briton with a fifty turn for verismo, whose Italian adaptation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was first given at Naples in 1906. Not one original idea in the whole Mascagnian farago, of course, but a wickedly convincing impersonation, as was Edward Naylor's duet from *The Angelus* (1909), a late Verdan pastiche of interminable tumescence.

D'Erlanger's choice of theme effectively highlights a major disaster area. The age turned everything into opera - Donizetti's *Pride and Prejudice*, Wagner's *Midemarch* and Offenbach's *Boule de Suif* may yet turn up - and the fatal good taste of English art made so many of these minor composers too timorously respectful of their texts to create the type of strong flexible vocal lines which Stanford needs to survive on his own. His version of *Mad Ade About Nothing* (1901) is a mournful example of the way most British composers of the last hundred years have been too well read: far from doing a Bolto on Shakespeare, Stanford leaves him reverently apart, so that the play rambles on in an awkward autonomy above wedding-cake orchestral textures designed to recall that this is comedy. The genuine wit and grace of the composer's church music were, alas, nowhere recognizable.

Scarcely an accident, then, that the evening's two sterling originals should have provided their own librettos. It was good to hear a fragment of Darius Milhaud's subtitled *Irretrievable*, its music winningly sensuous, yet essentially hard-headed, and even better to catch the magnificent closing echoes of Holst's *Siege*, unjustly dismissed by its creator as "good old Wagnerian bawling" and validating all claims for him as a wizard of orchestral sonorities. These and the rest were played and sung with more ardour than accuracy (an apparently "interesting" string line in Hamish MacCunn's *Jeannie Deans* was only a viola playing a semitone sharp) by the soloists and the chorus. At the admirable *Opera View*, the audience throughout showed engagingly partisan, but in the end it has to be said that the Corder and Naylor's and Cowen's of this world are forgotten not because they are English but because, simply, they are not terribly good.

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Oxford University Press

Upstairs 1.50



# A city of the plain

## Roland Oliver

Holders of Readers' Tickets may use it on a Monday and the Tuesday after a Bank Holiday Monday, when the Museum is closed to the public; and on Saturday mornings by prior appointment. It is normally open from Tuesdays to Fridays from 10am to 4pm and closed on Bank Holidays, Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

My argument did hinge on two very simple but also very important observations. The Asiatic Mode of Production (if it exists, which I leave open not from indifference, but because the argument does not depend on it) has two very important features: it is stagnant, and it constitutes a form of domination not engendered by the need to protect the interests of a pre-existing, economically defined class.

Let me answer the first of these objections by saying that, after reading the book three times, I simply cannot guess how its argument is conducted, if *not* in the terms I suggested. But if my opinion is not adequate to carry the point, let me quote Paulson's own:

*In the cases of Turner and Constable we have come down to the question of whether the gradual verbalizing that takes place as the 'symbolic order' is imposed on the landscape makes clear to the painter (and to the world) his trauma, or only a dis-*

ALAN RUDRUM.  
Department of English, Simon  
Fraser University, Burnaby, BC

## WITH AFRICA

published by W. ...  
viewed on January 7, 1988  
Official: The Life and Times  
London Johnson.

A. Guy is the author of *The Career of Sir Thomas More*

*British Economy* was published last year. He is Professor of Economic History at Bielefeld University, West Germany.

Something Ventured, was published last year.

The Witwatersrand itself did not have a heroic war. The mines came to standstill, and the miners and their hangers-on mostly departed to the Cape Colony. When they returned in the new century, it was to find a new, more advanced land expected to be accompanied by their wives. Along the ridge, residential suburbs were rising to replace the bachelors' and grass-widows' boarding-houses of the 1890s. Brick-making became one of the earliest industrial occupations available to landless Africans. Some earlier occupations, such as transitional between agriculture and industry, such as transport-riding and cob-shining, were already, as various sources show, in retreat before the railways and the electric train. The former Jesus now joined the municipal services, and employed black men out of doors in paving and road-making, water-

Among the last, one feature sad-ly illustrates the essential inhumanity of the migrant labour system. The young recruits to the regiment of the mines were allocated as "wives" to the most senior members and their initiation was sealed by acts of sodomy. The reader does very much need to know how far this was merely a reflection of the situation in every mining compound of the Rand. It is this one important shortcoming of these volumes that they tell us so little about the social and economic history of the industry, which gave rise to all the rest.

٥٠٠



## Seekers after seeds

Frances Partridge

MARGUERITE DUVAL

The King's Garden  
Translated by Annette Tomarken  
and Claudine Cowen  
214pp. Charlottesville: University of  
Virginia Press. \$14.95.  
0 8139 0916 3

A botanist who worked recently at Kew, but is now alas no more, was once asked why he had never married. His eyes sparkled behind his spectacles as he replied: "Because of my great love for the Flowers."

A love of flowers – perhaps more universal even than the love of animals – is apparent in early Egyptian painting and the botanical forms of their architecture. During the first two centuries of our era, Dioscorides, "the father of botany", maintained that plants should not be cut: the student should observe and describe their beautiful shapes, colours and scents as they grow. Galen advised travellers to go in search of them in their natural habitat. And so the passion for plant-hunting, and for collecting and drawing them, has thrived and persisted until today, even though the discovery of a new species is now a rarity.

Marguerite Duval has chosen to describe the adventurous voyages of French botanists of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries to all corners of the globe, in search of plants notable for their beauty or use to mankind as medicine or food, sometimes merely for their strangeness or noxious properties. Their struggles to bring their crates of specimens and seeds home to France, and then to acclimatize them in its gardens, were also full of drama, and often of disappointment. These early travelling botanists were very different from the modern collector, happily clanking his vacuum over the slopes of Upper

Teesdale. They braved incredible dangers, from shipwreck and earthquake to assassination by savages, often died of exotic fevers, and sometimes went mad. Melancholia seems to have been an occupational disease among them.

The kings of France were not immune from the growing passion for domesticating flowers. The first *Jardin des Plantes* was established at Montpelier in the reign of Henri IV, but the "King's Garden" of this book's English title was planned and planted by Louis XIII's doctor in Paris, where it may still be visited. For the next 200 years the French school of botany could compare with any in the world. Royal patronage continued: Gaston d'Orléans ("Monsieur") invited famous artists to paint the flowers in his garden at Blois; while Louis XIV, inspired by Fagon, the director of the King's Garden, sent botanists to China, the West Indies or Peru, to bring back the coffee bean, ginger and quinine (*cinchona*) as well as such sumptuous ornamental exotics as the Tulip Tree, *Magnolia grandiflora* and jasmynes from China, where also came dyes and bamboos. Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) had already reached Portugal; it was sent home to France by the French ambassador, Jean Nicot de Villemain, and was ground into snuff or chewed long before it was smoked. In the

seventeenth century a number of eminent names appear. Tournefort began to devote himself to taxonomy as well as travel, while his followers, the three Jussieu brothers and the Swiss, de Candolle, developed a system of natural classification which finally destroyed the crumbling edifice created by Linnaeus. Mansard aided the process of acclimatization by building glass-houses for Le Nôtre's garden at Versailles. Bougainville's name calls up the image of a showy shrub of Southern European gardens, but it was his friend the botanist Commerson, with whom he sailed round the world, who first collected it.

from Tahiti. Perhaps most famous among the directors of the King's Garden, the Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), was a man of wide culture, who found time to write an Essay on Style, and treatises on squinting and the use of the burning-glass, as well as his *Histoire Naturelle* in 52 volumes. Napoleon's obsession with Egypt led to an expedition by youthful scientists, and the booty brought back included the lotus, the papyrus, and beautiful roses and orchids to delight the Empress Josephine and to be painted by Redouté.

By the end of the nineteenth century the botanical gardens and museums were so well equipped that it was no longer necessary for lives to be risked for the love of flowers. But the world had undergone an enormous change. It was as if the plant species had been stirred around with a giant spoon, so that many had themselves become travellers and arrived far from their

original homes, with something of the same effect as is got by fruits and vegetables breaking through the seasonal barrier with the help of air transport. Many botanists have a sneaking feeling that nature should not be interfered with. I remember in the last war the excitement that was shown in a shell-hole on the Wiltshire downs. Could they have been in the packing of the bomb? That would have been "all right", just as it was when seeds took root in Kent that were supposed to have arrived in the mattresses of wounded men laid on the shore after the expedition of Walcheren. When it turned out that a joker had deliberately sprinkled the seeds in the shell-hole a sigh of disapproval went up.

Marguerite Duval has written about many fascinating characters and their exciting adventures in a free and spirited style, and often brings them to life with details about their

appearance, personalities, or private lives. A former editor of *Elle* and other magazines, she makes no pretence of botanical expertise. A food and plant-hunter and she satisfied it in the *Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*. This book for the general flower-loving reader, and it contains relevant and pleasant illustrations taken from engravings in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. It is a disastrous result of the author's unscholarly approach that there is no index of persons or places. However, the botanical garden of France are both listed and mapped – a very useful feature – and the English edition contains an index of plant names. The translators have added good many Latin names to the French text, thus opening possibilities of error, since neither French nor English plant names are always confined to one species.

## Planners of plots

Ruth Isabel Ross

ALVINE LEES-MILNE and  
ROSEMARY VERRY (Editors)

The Englishman's Garden  
154pp. Allen Lane. £10.95.  
0 7139 1436 X

BETTY MASSINGHAM

A Century of Gardeners  
256pp. Faber. £12.50.  
0 571 11811 9

Is there a difference between gardens made by men and those made by women? The question is posed by *The Englishman's Garden*, edited by Alvine Lees-Milne and Rosemary Verry; it follows their successful *The Englishwoman's Garden* published by Chitro and Windus in 1980. Both books could be called garden anthologies. Garden owners write about their own gardens, their ideas, their triumphs and their failures. No account of thirty odd gardens written by a single horticultural writer would be so human or so stimulating. Because the garden owners are such enthusiasts there are no dull descriptions; the most entertaining piece being written by Beverly Nichols.

As in *The Englishwoman's Garden* the romantic influence of Sissinghurst is strong. There are delectable photographs of mellow brick paths, billowing old-fashioned roses, white gardens, terra-cotta pots and dreamy-looking statues. Other gardens are Robinsonian, with water plants, shrubs or trees in generous groups and sheets of naturalized bulbs. *Cyclamen hederifolium* are great favourites; so are magnolias.

The desire to please others was prominent in English women gardeners, but some English men have been more anxious to please themselves. Many of those who took over neglected gardens have been ambitious and even extravagant, working with large spaces and trees. The results are impressive. Maurice Mason planted eighty or ninety kinds of sorbus. Lord de Ramsey collected over forty species of willow and Sir Bernard Lowell grandly put in lime and poplar avenues to commemorate important events in his life.

Englishmen, it seems, like to introduce garden ornaments on a large scale. Nicholas Ridley built "walls, bridges, paths, watercourses, aqueducts and pillars all out of local stone". Keith Steadman made a great airy folly from cast-iron balconies of demolished Georgian houses. Sir Frederick Gibberd had the bizarre but effective idea of placing two excessively tall Corinthian pillars from Coutts' Bank in a woodland glade.

The professional horticulturist contributors, such as Graham Thomas, Christopher Lloyd and Fred Norton, made few mistakes in their gardens; their articles are helpful but, to the amateur, less encouraging than those written by the businessmen, politicians and artists, who cheerfully admit their errors.

The views of these non-professionals on gardens and garden design are lively and sometimes dogmatic. Hardy Amies writes firmly, "where walls are visible your paths and beds must be straight and related to the walls. You can only permit meandering paths and irregular beds and pools if your background is the sky and trees with their irregular shapes." Sir Frederick Ashton has comforting words for everyone except landscape artists: "Do exactly as you want to do and don't listen to anybody – if you like those terrible red salvia put them in." Lord Lambton is downright in his praise of order, his hatred of heathers and of orange azaleas, his scathing opinion of Hildote where, horror of horrors, an avenue "leads to a turnip field".

Included here are large and small gardens, London suburban and country gardens, on chalk, sand and clay and gardens from all parts of England. Each article is headed by a charming vignette of the garden, followed by excellent photographs of the garden. A slight book, and in no sense a manual, but any interested reader, man or woman, English or not, starting to make a garden would find it full of amusement and inspiration.

It has not always been recognized that a most exciting advance in English gardening took place in the nineteenth century. When, in 1951 and 1952, the Irish poet Geoffrey Taylor published his charming books of essays *Some 19th Century Gardeners* and *The Victorian Flower Garden* he was exploring largely unknown territory. Since then garden history has become more popular, with some writers concentrating on the Victorian Age. Biographies have been written about outstanding gardeners of the time, Dean Hole, William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll and Ellen Willmott. And these four are naturally among the seventeen distinguished gardeners and garden writers in *A Century of Gardeners*. Betty Massingham's century runs from 1850 to 1950. The gardeners she writes about are an interesting and pleasant group, and her gently rambling style suits their activities. Most were optimistic, cheerful people and generous with plants. They wrote articles for gardeners' magazines and helpful books for the new breed of enthusiastic amateurs. A few were brilliant and original; their successful writings had, by the turn of the century, inspired countless skilful gardeners in country houses, suburban houses and rectories.

Two of Mrs Massingham's best-known horticulturists rose from humble beginnings. Joseph Paxton started out as a junior gardener, became head-gardener at Chatsworth at the age of twenty-four, and eventually held a parliamentary seat for Coventry, chaired the Midland Railway, designed the Crystal Palace and was knighted. William Robinson, at twenty working hard on an Irish demesne, made such a success of writing that he was able to buy Graveyard Manor, an estate of 700 acres, and to keep thirty horses. Several others were country parsons. Dean Hole, the rosarian, Canon

Ellacombe ("A true gardener is happy by the pleasure he takes in giving them to his friends" was his motto) and Reverend Charles Wolley Dod was tranquil and entirely delightful people. Their clerical lives were enriched by the books and articles they wrote. Journeys to London for flower shows and by contacts with other gardeners. But the net is cast a little wide when Reverend W. Koble Martin, primarily a botanist, is included among them.

Seven of the gardeners selected are women, who came mainly from privileged backgrounds – Mrs Birk, Miss Jekyll, Miss Willmott and the Hon Vita Sackville-West. The first had much in common; both studied art and were influenced generally by William Morris. Mrs Birk later became Burne-Jones and Rossetti, and Miss Jekyll was a friend of Ruskin and the watercolourist, who may have encouraged her to exploit her sense of colour in the garden. It is pleasing to read about the lesser-known women, Eleanor Sinclair Robde, a school teacher, and the energetic American and disciple of Miss Jekyll, Louisa King.

Mrs Massingham rightly gives space to William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll. The wild gardeners, see now, the woodland garden, naturalized bulbs, borders with grass and silver plants stem from literature were vigorously canvassed by them. But Mrs Massingham, for lack of space, fails to give her characters the depth and for those readers who want a little of garden history there are slight biographies which seem to be suspended in space. An introduction providing some background would have helped. Two small errors creep in. *Victoria amazonica* was not regina; *Victoria regia* not regina; Miss Jekyll died in 1933.

*Plant Hunting in Nepal*, Roy Leith's account of a 1971 horticultural expedition to a remote area of eastern Nepal, has recently appeared in paperback (194pp. Croom Helm. £6.95. 0 7099 1637 X). A professional would do so if they take seriously what they were taught at school. Moreover, the book number of people who speak it would rather be speaking some other language. For those curious about how the state of affairs has arisen, *A Social History of English* will be most welcome. A readable, non-technical explanation of the "external" history of our language. At the same time, the reader will learn a good deal about the changes to the language itself, because of Dick Leith's main points is that changes in the language's external circumstances have led to changes in its internal structure.

The book is an excellent antidote to one hears about what a wonderful language English is, and how its virtues are lost to its being so widely adopted by any other modern language. Leith firmly rejects this view and he uses the results of linguistic scholarship and theory to show that, by and large, the history of English was due purely and simply to force of arms – starting with Anglo-Saxons, who brought it from the Continent, and moving through the centuries with it.

## LANGUAGE

## Words of wisdom

Alan Brownjohn

J. A. SIMPSON (Editor)

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs  
272pp. Oxford University Press.  
£10.  
0 19 566131 2

Proverbs are not merely quaint and antique sayings. Their purpose is quite obviously didactic. They cap arguments, they generalize from particular instances with irrefutable authority. Proverbs chide, and hector. Quite a lot of them in a compilation like this new *Concise Oxford Dictionary* are abrupt imperatives, expressing social and personal expediency. When in Rome, do as the Romans do; and don't count your chickens before they are hatched.

They come with the wisdom of the age at their backs, and a proverb heard for the first time in later life comes with no less force than the saying first heard in childhood, because it is unvarying to have only one. What is established for a long time, one should have heard about it. Eagles don't catch flies? *Exempla* had it, in his *Adages*, in Latin: *exempla non capiunt muscas*. A proverb is a question. It enshrines a conclusion about human behaviour in a word, and the rules are often rather daunting: the devil's children have the devil's luck, ill weeds grow apace, there may keep a secret if two of them be dead.

So it was reassuring to discover, going up a little, that proverbs are not merely didactic, even quite patently contradicted each other. Many proverbs have been commonly turned upside down, sometimes perhaps because the original sense was mistaken, or wilful, or just wilfully altered, or because... The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* provides a beautiful literary example of just this, under "it is a wise child that knows its own father". The very statement in Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) – "Wise are the Children in these days that know their own fathers, especially if they be begotten in Dogge days, when their fathers are frantick with love" – is, of course, reversed (calculatedly?), and has typical and more sage, a few years later, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

## Standard bearers

R. A. Hudson

English History of English  
240pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£10.95 (paperback, £4.95).  
0 7100 9280 1

English is spoken as a native language by over 300 million people in the world today, yet the majority of its speakers probably feel they speak it badly, or would do so if they take seriously what they were taught at school. Moreover, the book number of people who speak it would rather be speaking some other language. For those curious about how the state of affairs has arisen, *A Social History of English* will be most welcome. A readable, non-technical explanation of the "external" history of our language. At the same time, the reader will learn a good deal about the changes to the language itself, because of Dick Leith's main points is that changes in the language's external circumstances have led to changes in its internal structure.

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"It is a wise father that knows his own child."

So proverbs were not infallible and yet their metaphorical content has preserved their strength, as it originally contained their magic. Proverbs are a storehouse of metaphorical usages which need no updating, and for the most part, do not receive it. Garbage in, garbage out? It might be as anciently derived as, say, if you lie with dogs, you will get up with fleas, with which it has distant affinities – and that is first to be found in medieval Latin. In fact, the former is as new as 1964. "Garbage" is a colloquial term in data processing for 'incorrect input' which will, according to the proverb, inevitably produce faulty output. The old metaphor has not been replaced by anything modern, and it is likely to be a long time before it is.

The metaphors of proverbs can be scabrous, censorious, haughty, insupportable. There goes more to marriage than four bare legs in a bed. This has something of all four qualities, and most proverbs are inclusive enough with just one or two. This dictionary is rich in modern instances of wise old saws and quotes a gentler use of Shakespeare's "Cowards die many times before their deaths": (proverbs, and proverbial quotations like this one, are not often gentle). "Noel Coward will come back again and again, and win his niche among the great dramatists." This was said in 1927, when the dramatist was still very young indeed. But why has not the Earl of Rochester's gloss on cowardice found a proverbial use? Is not grandmother sophisticated enough to know that "all men would be cowards if they durst"?

Certainly she is clever enough to be cryptic, and knows the power of mastery. Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven. He that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay: the speaker has gone before the listener can unravel them. He that will to Cupar man to Cupar. This is not necessarily true, one feels, but it is curious enough to sound so. In our own time, and probably before, the gnomic nature of many proverbs has led to the invention of new ones; this book supplies many examples of apparent meaninglessness from the tradition: A cherry year, a merry year; a plum year, a dumb year, which even a collector of 1678 described as "a merle and senseless rhyme as far as I can see".

The introduction by J. A. Simpson

to his rich and absorbing collection in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* is succinct and helpful. Proverbs elude categorization, but Mr Simpson's three main kinds cover most of them. "Nature abhors a vacuum" is a case of the first kind, an abstract statement embodying a general truth. The second kind generalizes observations from everyday life. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. The third kind of proverb is a saying from traditional folklore, often one which has been a classical maxim and descended to the vernacular. After dinner rest a while, after supper walk a mile. Health and husbandry quite naturally bulk largely in the sayings of the folk, where proverbs often shade away from the general into pieces of ordinary, practical, unproverbial good advice. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is listed here as a proverb, but it is really a medical saw (apparently first traceable in Pembrokehire), and not nearly as proverbial as the worldly-wise "The apple never falls far from the tree."

At what point does a proverb become a mere saying? The answer seems to be when the metaphorical content lacks the necessary resonance, and will serve in a purely literal sense. Thus, "The early bird catches the worm" is proverbial, as is "You cannot catch old birds with chaff." But "Little birds that can sing and won't sing must be made to sing" surely signifies not a general wisdom, but a particular form of frustration with stubborn children. It is less of a proverb than a bullying promise. The case of superstitions is a tricky one. Simpson admits a few where the formulation verges on the proverbial: Dream of a funeral and you fear of a marriage (or vice versa, as the case may be); Many in May, rue for aye. Like proverbs, they enunciate rules. But are they the same as the general rules, based on observation of human or cosmic behaviour, on which so many early proverbs are based (the last drop makes the cup run over)? Or are they really just sayings about the "fortunes of people" and the "behaviour of things"? On the other hand, you should know a man seven years before you stir his fire, context, is a true borderline case, quite usable as a proverb advising against interference in someone else's affairs.

The dictionary gives numerous citations for each proverb, beginning with a known origin or a first traceable use, and ending with examples of

modern recurrence. Proverbs are an enduring phenomenon, and it is perhaps less surprising that Simpson (almost as up-to-date as it is possible to be, with examples from Margaret Drabble's *The Middle Ground* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*) provides later origins than we might imagine for some famous proverbs, than that he should find frequent recent use for old saws. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know? There is certainly a form of it from 1586, but at that time the second half of the sentence speaks of "the good which is yet to know". The form we use now is attributed to Trollope in *Barsetshire Towers* (1857), though admittedly the speaker claims it is "an old saying". Time, or known literary hands, have polished many of the proverbs. It is interesting to read through an entry until the familiar aphoristic form appears in the list of quotations. In 1655, a feather was breaking a horse's back, in 1793 a feather was sinking a camel (in Massachusetts), in *Domby and Son* (1848), there was a feather and a laden camel's back, and only in 1876, in Banks's *The Manchester Man*, did the "last straw break the camel's back". Thereafter, the best-known version

continues alive and well, down to *Pomroy's Complaint* (1969).

Explanations are sometimes given in the dictionary, but some of the enigmatic proverbs – and some of the puzzling inclusions – might perhaps be explained more; the instances of their use do not always suggest a sense. It is merry in hall when beards was all? That is surely a likeable catch-phrase, coined down for posterity in *Henry IV, Part 2*. Is it a proverb, and *has it a meaning*? Ridout and Whitting's *English Proverbs Explained* supplies some of the answers, but not all. Simpson's system of cross-references is exemplary, sending the reader backwards and forwards through the dictionary in search of the further proverbs which the citation of the first reminds him of – all easily found. Inevitably, a dictionary fails to suggest the nuances of meaning in the modern application of proverbs and proverbial sayings; but to include all the inferences drawn from the peculiar uses made of proverbs would require a volume much less concise and useful than Mr Simpson's already generous and scholarly collection; and everyone stretches his legs according to his comfort.

## Everything with chips

Anthony Hyman

DENNIS LONGLEY and MICHAEL SHAIN

Dictionary of Information Technology  
381pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £6.95).  
0 333 32762 4

So many new words are now flooding into the English language that it has even been found necessary to compile dictionaries of neologisms. One of the most prolific fields for innovation has been computing and information technology, where an inordinate number of new terms has been accompanied by a staccato of acronyms. To help newcomers several dictionaries have been published. The present *Dictionary of Information Technology* has a somewhat different mix from earlier examples and is one of the better ones. It will be useful to professionals. The book is well printed and bound, and both copy editing and general editing are of a high standard.

However, there are several problems in compiling such a dictionary which Dennis Longley and Michael Shain have not entirely solved. One is IBM terms. DOS is, as the authors say, a dis-bused operating system, but to most computer people it is a specific IBM product. Longley and Shain have not included entries for OS, or even MVS, which is still, in its extended architecture version, IBM's flagship operating system for large processors; even though such terms are in everyday use in computing, IBM has almost created a language of its own, and since most large-scale computing is done with IBM or IBM-compatible systems, their terms really must be included. A work of this kind is to be comprehensive. Nor can it be claimed that IBM terms have been excluded because they are peculiar to one company. DuPont's "Mylar" and Texas Instruments' "Speak and Spell" are both included.

The weakest set of entries concerns technology, where the authors seem ill at ease. For example, "Emitter Coupled Logic" (ECL) is not, as they claim, a method for connecting logic elements, but a set of integrated circuit logic elements using a particular type of circuit. It is also known as MECL (Monolithic Emitter Coupled Logic) – not defined here – and is a form of Current Mode Logic (CML) – also not defined – although quite commonly used. MOS is defined only as "Metal Oxide Semiconductor" although it is also used in the dictionary as Metal Oxide Silicon. Actually these are alternative definitions.

The authors have obviously had great difficulty in deciding what to include within so restricted a compass. There is no entry under "pt key" or

"program function key" but there is, curiously, for "function key". The IBM data-base IMS is included, but CICS and BOMP are not. In this case the choice is sensible, but it reminds one just how much has had to be omitted. There is no entry under IBM itself, but perhaps it is assumed that the fledgling computer person will have swallowed that ubiquitous term at the first byte. The selection of acronyms seems sometimes to have been made almost at random: TP – either Transaction Processing or Teleprocessing – is not included, nor is DPMO (Data Processing Manager), though both would seem necessary for part at least of the avowed readership, "the professional user of information systems." But to be encyclopedic, and thus meet the publishers' optimistic claim, the book would have had to be several times as long.

The definitions are generally well written within the constraints of length. But consider for example "mainframe", which is defined as: "In computing, (1) a name applied to any large central processing unit" (the second definition is indeed of secondary importance). What is large? Its physical size? Its processing power? For the definition to have any real meaning it would need to be historical in character, and that would require far greater length. The authors, or perhaps the publishers, seem aware of the problem and they have provided a few long entries of 1,000 words or more. This technique has been tried before, but it does not solve the problem, even though these entries are, within their limits, quite informative. There is no alternative to making many of the ordinary entries considerably longer, and for a standard reference book, on information processing we shall have to wait for a dictionary based like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, on historical principles.

In *The Semaphore: The Story of the Admiralty-to-Portsmouth Shutter Telegraph and Semaphore Lines 1796 to 1847* (221pp. Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., Elm Court, Hiffmange, Devon. £8.00 0 7223 1629 1) the author, T. W. Holmes, who had himself been a "himal-boy" with the Royal Navy, attempts to show the difference between the Shutter Telegraph System and the Semaphore, of which there has been much confusion over the years. He tells how it was the French who by the end of 1792 were leading the way "with their astounding new system of signalling" while at the same time the British army had no idea of signalling at all and were sending messages by "a gallop or runner". Descriptions are given of the lives and working conditions of the "Handymen" and their families and the book contains many photographs and line-drawings.

## Pictures of plants

Redmond O'Hanlon

W. KEBLE MARTIN

The New Concise British Flora  
Edited and revised by Douglas H. Kent  
247pp. Ebury Press/Michael Joseph. £12.50.  
0 7181 2126 0

W. Keble Martin (1877–1969) read botany at Oxford, where he was possessed by a "desire to know the food plants of Lepidoptera" and where he was "started... in the habit of drawing". He then joined the priesthood, served in industrial parishes in the North of England and, in 1918, as a military chaplain in France – by which time, he tells us, his working on an illustrated flora of the British Isles "was well under way". And a mere forty-seven years later it was completed and published.

Far from enjoying an exercise in Natural Theology, indulging in the proper relaxation of the year-naturalist at play while *Artem maculatum* preaches God's design in the universe as plainly as a real parson in the pulpit, Keble Martin's anxious preface reveals his fear that every leaf he painted might be but a green reminder of some parishioner whose needs he had thereby neglected. He wants us to know that his posting to large grimy towns was "at his own request"; that the drawing was "mostly confined to an annual holiday", or when "this world for neighbours having estate had not yet begun". So it is comforting to know that he lived just long enough to enjoy the beginning of the extraordinary success of his marvelous work – from its first publication in May 1965 to the third impression of the third edition in 1978, 558,000 copies of *The Concise British Flora* were printed.

This edition justifies the claim of its title by the addition of eighteen possibly native and eighty introduced

species; the noticing of widespread hybrids (based on C. A. Stace's *Hybridization and the Flora of the British Isles*, 1975); a revision of all English plant names according to the dictates of J. G. Donny, *et al.*, *English Names of Wild Flowers. A Recommended List of the Botanical Society of the British Isles*, 1980; and the provision of more details of distribution and habitat.

So a typical entry now reads "*Orchis simla* Lam. Monkey orchid. Tubers ovoid, stem 10–30cm, pale or cream, hooded, lip with a narrow crimson lobes; spatulate, bushy places on calcareous soil, mostly S. and E. England, very rare. Flo. May–June"; whilst on the opposite page purple proboscis monkeys dance, suspended in perpetuity, around their stem-top. And a much improved cross-index allows one to find them at once. But the greatest improvement is the rough painting-paper look of my already faded first edition has been replaced by the glossy results of new printing technology, and the colours are truer. If now seems much more probable. According to which page and to which points in your garden you should inadvertently leave this Flora open, that the nymph of the Emperor Dragonfly, *Ajax imperator*, will wreak its diabolical armoured body out of your pond and up the stem and keeled leaf of W. Keble Martin's *Sparganium erectum*, the Branched bur-reed; or that a passing *Bombus pratorum* should attempt to squeeze itself up the coned ramp of *Digitalis purpurea*.

In any case, for the amateur botanist, already equipped, say, with a second-hand copy of McCarey and Fitch's *Wild Flowers at a Glance* (1949) (where the flowers are arranged by colour for an easy first identification), with Step's three-volume *Blotches of the Wayside and Woodland* (for the flowerer's chat) and with Geoffrey Grierson's *The Englishman's Flora* (1958) (for the quirky botanical history) this is the one remaining essential book.







# Capital on the move

Sidney Pollard

MICHAEL EDELSTEIN

Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism: The United Kingdom, 1850-1914

367pp. Methuen. £22.50.  
0 416 34730 4

The search for the causes of post-war British economic failure continues as avidly as ever, and among these causes the slowing-down of the late Victorian economy figures prominently; nor does the flood of literature on British imperialism show any signs of abating. Both topics meet in the theme of this book: British overseas investment between 1850 and 1914. For among the mainstays of imperialism, as seen by J. A. Hobson, by Lenin and by their numerous followers, was the need to seek investment abroad, since the home markets for capital were drying up; and among the most frequently discussed causes for the alleged failure of the Victorian economy was the shunting of capital abroad, to the detriment of investment in new methods and new industries at home. The researcher with all the recent material and the latest economic techniques at his disposal is therefore faced with two diametrically opposed doctrines: a Britain panting for capital which is being drained abroad by a misguided capital market and irrational investors; or a Britain suffering from a glut of capital, which only investment abroad can relieve.

How to decide among these two extremes? The problem is harder to solve than would appear at first sight, for there are enormous difficulties of definition, of simultaneous cause-and-effect relationships, and even of a possible co-existence of capital shortages and surpluses - in different markets or of different types of capital. Full agreement cannot even be expected on the question of how to

calculate a rate of return on capital invested. Also, as we know from other discussions of this kind, it is not at all easy to distinguish pull-and-push initiatives when capital moves across frontiers. Finally, as is normal in economic history, the data are incomplete and have to be filled in with guesswork, proxies and interpolations.

The difficulties start with the sums involved. There is no doubt that Britain was by far the largest foreign investor in that period, that there is no other example in history of a country investing so large a part of its national income abroad or drawing, by the end of the period, such a large part of its income from foreign investments; and it is also agreed that the rate of foreign investment accelerated rapidly in the last years of peace. But the absolute figures are in dispute since D.C.M. Platt has pointed out the inconsistencies and exaggerations in the statistics that have been universally used for almost seventy years.

Unfortunately, Michael Edelstein's book has come out too soon for these doubts to be taken into account, but they point up one weakness of the economic approach which dominates this volume: the unreliability of the initial series, and the danger of building on them numerical constructs that frequently go down to two decimal places. Other typical weaknesses are the tendency to neglect the quantities not explained by the variables used; the tendency to assume that whatever "explanatory" fluctuations must also explain the underlying drive or trend; and the tendency to assume that numerical correlations must necessarily reflect direct causal relations. Fortunately, the author is too good an economist and a historian, and he knows his subject, on which he has worked for many years, too well, to fall into these traps. He uses his numerous attempts at correlations only as a test for propositions arrived at independently, and interprets them with caution and understanding; one would wish to see these qualities

applied more often in the literature.

Edelstein's model is based on a market which brings together desired savings and desired investments. The former are assumed to be related to the age structure of a population, to the income distribution among factors, and to rates of return. Short-term fluctuations in desired savings are related to changes in incomes, wealth and rates of return. Desired investments are divided into two groups, housing investment, related to population changes, and investment in agriculture and industry, related to the growth in productivity and the relative prices of capital equipment. Plausible as these assumptions are, it will be evident that they are macro-quantities and cannot deal with the differences between sectors or industries, which clearly played a key role in such issues as the alleged deprivation of certain British industries of capital because of the organization of the London and provincial capital markets. The model is also intended to incorporate changes within the period, such as the fall in birth-rates and technical innovation, and it deals with investment of British capital at home, in the US, Canada, Australia and occasionally, Argentina.

In the event, if the numerous calculations performed here are to be believed, none of the extreme positions taken up on these questions survives close examination. There appeared to be no incisive shortage of capital in the UK to hold up desirable projects; even after risk factors have been eliminated (by a somewhat dubious procedure), return on foreign investment was higher than on British when like is compared with like, which points to the absence of an overwhelming net desire for capital at home. It should be stressed, however, that these results are based on averages, which hide many extreme cases of individual firms; that the calculations are made on Stock Exchange asset values, and not on historical quantities invested, which would be the appropriate measure to

answer the question whether investments were channelled in the right direction; and that companies which had failed were excluded from the sample. Nor does the opposite view, of a capital glut, get more than very limited support: over much of the period, and in several of the markets analysed, there was no sign of over-saving in Britain, though in the last two decades, and in some markets, especially the US, there were strong indications of a "push" out of Britain rather than a pull of opportunities abroad.

## The ethical wing

Donald Winch

ALON KADISH

The Oxford Economists in the Late Nineteenth Century  
312pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.  
£19.50.  
0 19 821886 9

This study in "collective social and intellectual biography" belongs to a genre to which there have been two related contributions in recent years. Christopher Harvie's *The Lights of Liberalism* and Christopher Kent's *Brains and Numbers*. What these studies have in common is a concern to trace the careers of groups of late-nineteenth-century intellectuals from their Oxford and Cambridge beginnings to maturity. In this case Alon Kadish deals with a group of Oxford men, often sharing a lower-middle-class background and radical liberal enthusiasms, whose active lives were mostly spent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade or so of the twentieth. Among the better-known members of his cast were W. J. Ashley, Edwin Cannan, L. L. Price, W. A. S. Hewins, and H. Llewellyn Smith; and the formative influences on them at Oxford were the teachings and example of Arnold Toynbee, T. H. Green, and to a lesser extent, J. E. Thorold Rogers. They are rightly described as economists despite the fact that none of them made any significant contribution to the discipline now known as economics.

The Oxford economists were, in varying degrees, committed to the development of a more explicitly ethical and historical alternative to the orthodox theoretical approach to classical political economy associated with the names of David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill; and they increasingly found themselves in conflict with the new "organon" of economic knowledge being constructed by Alfred Marshall from his secure base in Cambridge. The inability of the Oxford group either to find a leader of Marshall's stature or to capture an equivalent intellectual or institutional base of their own is an important part of Kadish's story. For, despite obtaining support for some aspects of their campaign against theoretical economics from two Cambridge men, William Cunningham and W. S. Foxwell, the ethico-evolutionary approach made little permanent inroad on the orthodox version of the subject in Britain beyond those points which Marshall and his followers - chiefly, in methodological matters at least, J. M. Keynes - were already prepared to concede. Indeed, concession seems the wrong word to describe something to which Marshall in particular laid personal claim, namely a persistent ethical purpose and a preoccupation with social evolution.

Economists have a strong preference for histories of their discipline that concentrate on success, and this has meant that little room is normally accorded in the standard histories to the losers in the long-running feud between historians and theorists for the soul of economics. If the historical critics are granted an honourable mention in despatches, the honour awarded is usually only a consolation prize in the form of credit for founding a neighbouring academic enterprise called economic history - an enterprise with which economists have no quarrel as long as it does not seek, as it patently did in the nineteenth century, to usurp their claims to knowledge.

This apart, this is a book to be warmly commended, both for interesting reading and for reference. I know of no better treatment of its fascinating theme.

The scholarship, and the balance of this study, are impressive. The author has a flair for backing a claim up through complex issues and for giving each of theory, of economics, of common sense, their due. Within limits, the work is a model of its kind. It is a pity that in the nature of things it has to deal in national aggregates and averages on questions in which numerous individual decisions or forms, grouped at least by sector and region.

## Endlessly proliferating

Heather O'Donoghue

Carol J. Clover

The Medieval Saga  
210pp. Cornell University Press. £14.  
0 8014 1447 4

Icelandic sagas used to be regarded as pre-medieval creations, as oral stories merely copied up in the Middle Ages. But for some time now, scholars have argued for the medieval origins of these works - hence Carol J. Clover's title *The Medieval Saga*. Ms. Clover goes one step further in arguing that the Icelandic sagas, as literary compositions, bear direct comparison with some of the major narrative works of contemporary France, and that "as formal constructions they are not separate from the larger European development of the thirteenth century, but part of it."

Behind Clover's argument lie two quite different critical works: T. M. Andersson's *The Icelandic Family Saga* and Eugene Vinaver's *The Rise of Romance*. Andersson's book claims that family sagas are built on the simple, old pattern of induction, conflict, climax, revenge, reconciliation and aftermath. It is a thoroughly over-reductive structural analysis of saga narrative. Vinaver's *Interludes* theory has been justly celebrated, but *The Rise of Romance* takes as its subject medieval French and English chivalric romances whose content, in terms of *matière* at least, bears no resemblance whatever to that of the bulk of the Icelandic sagas. Throughout *The Medieval Saga*, Ms. Clover's argument is laid bare without reference to the major contribution to the field made by these two books, and then French and Icelandic works are compared in spite of tremendous differences in theme and content.

Clover sees the sagas as units of "oral scenes" or scenes of "oral scenes" - a term which she uses to describe the mechanics of proliferation, that is, the enmeshing, or "splicing" of threads of narrative. Further, she argues that each individual saga has a "tendency to interlink with other sagas" to create one vast cyclic whole. There are problems with all these contentions. To begin with, the question of what is and what is not literary in an extant saga is a very vexed one, and there is really no way of distinguishing one from the other. The question is in passing - in fact, the blend of popular tradition and literary creation may have reached such a stage in the sagas as we now have them that we shall never be able to distinguish the two.

More controversial is Clover's picture of a saga narrative as endlessly extendable and arbitrarily delimited - she speaks of a narrative "lacking natural borders" and "capable of infinite regression into impinging matter." Such a view is the almost inevitable result of analysing structure without due regard to thematic content. Andersson did exactly the same: he remarked of *Laxdœla saga* that "one knows nothing by skipping a page here and there from the truth." Clover, for example, takes the story of the doomed marriage between Unnr and Hrútr, with which *Njáls saga* opens, to be a "prefatory sub-plot," considerably overdeveloped in proportion to its actual function. Yet she admits to the episode's "proleptic" value in the question of "failed marriages." Had she viewed the effects of sexual jealousy as one of its major themes - as Ursula Drönke does in her recent, *Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture* - the "actual function" of the story would of course have seemed different. Clover notes several times in this book that structure is the eye of the beholder, but mostly fails to heed its implications. The account of the formidable marriage of Unnr and Hrútr, which is the opening of *Laxdœla saga* opens, is not there, "for its own sake," as Clover would have it; *Laxdœla saga* is the

## Medieval Literature

# Endlessly proliferating

Heather O'Donoghue

Carol J. Clover

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characterized by fiercely strong-minded women, of whom this remarkable character is the first. Finally, to say that the savage feuding between Hallgrdr and Berghora in *Njáls saga* "does not have any direct consequences on the plot" is wrong, however "plot" or "direct consequences" are defined. Clover suggests that this is "the sort of material modern plot summaries are likely to bracket or omit altogether as irrelevant to the story" - though not even Andersson goes so far. She recognizes that a rigorously neo-classical approach which might bracket or omit such material would be too extreme, but rejects such an approach on the questionable grounds that it is a feature of saga narrative to include episodes which loosely proliferate from the central matter. There are, of course, "digressions" in the sagas, but whether they are a characteristic feature of good sagas is another matter.

Clover's third point, about interrelationships between different sagas, touches on a major flaw in her critical procedure. She is not concerned to distinguish between different genres of saga writing, between different kinds of saga. Perhaps the problem arises from the over-inclusiveness of the word "saga". Some works are indeed compilations - *Flateyjarbók*, for example - and will

bear structural comparison with other synthetic works such as Malory's *Morte Darthur*. But the family sagas of the so-called "classical period" are not in the least like compilations: their boundaries, thematic and structural, are the result of conscious selection and authorial control. There are also vital distinctions to be made within the subgroup "family sagas". *Egils saga* is biographical in form, and this obviously has a bearing on the shape and extent of its narrative; *Eyrbyggja saga*, on the other hand, takes as its subject not one man's life but the settling of a whole district. It was precisely because Andersson tried to fit *Eyrbyggja saga* into a standard structural pattern that he ended up calling it "troublesome and amorphous", just as Clover sees it as lying far from "any discernible principal of structural unity".

Vinaver's theory of interlace rests on the belief that in the Middle Ages, writers began to attempt simultaneous narrative, but, since, unlike actuality, two narratives cannot actually run at the same time, techniques of narrative interlace developed. Clover is quite right to point to the running together of two or more narratives as one of the most striking features of the family sagas. These sagas take as their subject-matter families or communities and the relationship between individuals

within these groups. They thus attempt a breadth of subject-matter which requires "a multi-plot" narrative technique. In a sense, therefore, content determines form. But Clover points to the opening of *Njáls saga* as evidence of the author's "baroque propensities" because the reader is first introduced to the bride-to-be, Unnr, then to Hrútr and his half-brother Hoskuldur, only to be returned to Unnr when Hoskuldur proposes that Hrútr should marry her. Clover sees this as interlace for its own sake, implying a decorative function. To draw attention to this extraordinary method of telling a story is extremely important, but the method need not be viewed as a formal *jeu d'esprit*. In conventional narrative, it would indeed be natural to introduce characters as they play a part in the story, but family sagas, in trying to reconcile simultaneous narratives with natural chronological flow, sometimes introduce characters before they act. Unnr does not come into existence because Hrútr wants to marry her; she is already present, in the fictional narrative as she would be in the real world.

Clover is generally good in her analysis of simultaneous narrative in saga writing; she points out very clearly how this "advance warning" technique can result in a finely uncluttered narrative climax - as in the burning of Njáll, when the loyalties, motives,

reservations and ambitions of the burners are already lodged in the reader's mind as the event approaches. Illuminating work like this on the literary techniques of saga narrative is extremely welcome.

Clover's conclusion is more moderate than the publisher's blurb may lead one to expect. She argues not that saga writers used Continental models (though noting wistfully: "material evidence of this is hard to come by") but that "the saga and the prose romances represent... independent responses to a common medieval aesthetic". Perhaps the book would have been even more persuasive had Clover not tried to deal with so many different kinds of saga - indeed with so much material in general. She considers briefly interlace technique in ninth and tenth-century skaldic verse, and Viking art, but leaves us with the perfunctory precept to regard these techniques as "anticipatory". Towards the end of the book, she proposes a chronological order for historical and family sagas based on the degree of sophistication shown in interlace techniques. Such subjects are clearly whole books in themselves. In fact, the comparison Ms. Clover tries to draw between French interlaced narratives and almost any saga one might care to mention could have filled a book twice this size had the Icelandic element been confined to *Njáls saga* alone.

## Changes on the permanent way

Sherwin Bailey

G. FREEMAN ALLEN

Railways: Past, Present and Future  
304pp. Orbis. £12.50.  
0 85613 322 1

The Industrial Revolution in Britain, and the consequent expansion of manufacture and trade, soon found both the waterways (navigable rivers and canals) and roads to be obsolete as means of the economical bulk conveyance of minerals and goods. It was the development and application of steam power to the haulage of large loads along tracks evolved from the primitive industrial plateways that made possible a service that neither waterways nor roads could provide. The Stockton and Darlington line (1825) became the first steam-hauled public railway, soon to be followed by the Liverpool and Manchester line. The Rainhill trials organized by the directorate of the latter established the capacity and general principles of design of the steam locomotive. During the decades following many lines were promoted throughout Britain for the haulage of traffic by steam power. Gangs of navvies transformed the appearance of the countryside by constructing cuttings, embankments and viaducts, and to maintain even gradients pierced obstructing hills by tunnels; so the shape of a railway system began to emerge. After much contention a standard gauge was fixed, and a network of lines connected the country's centres of industry and population. The new railways survived the financial crises resulting from the speculation and ambition of entrepreneurs such as George Hudson, while Parliament, whose sanction was required for every proposed venture, kept a watchful eye upon developments, concerned mainly to protect public and private interests, to ensure safety, and to prevent monopolies. As time went on, travellers demanded greater speed,

comfort and convenience. Coaches became more and more comfortable, for all but the third class of passenger, and facilities on the trains and stations increased. Engineers developed the capacities of the locomotive, and improved methods of track maintenance and signalling contributed to the faster and safer running of the trains.

By the closing years of the nineteenth century, which saw the emergence of England's last railway, the Great Central, the steam railway had established itself in North America, on the continent of Europe, and in the East, and some notable engineering feats had been achieved, though later to be come the great tunnels and viaducts of Switzerland. In the United States, standards of comfort and even luxury were attained which served as a model for other countries. In the twentieth century locomotive development proceeded apace under engineers of genius such as Churchward, Gresley and Stanier in Britain, Chapelon in France, and Wagner in Germany, and some remarkably high speeds were attained. Mallard's 126 mph reached on the LNER stands as a record for a steam engine.

By 1900 it might have seemed that the position of the steam railway as a general carrier was assured. But the devastation caused by two world wars, and the economic depression following them, and above all the development of the internal combustion engine challenged its dominance. The petrol-driven truck and the aeroplane posed a threat to short-haul rail traffic, and to the inter-city main line train. The diesel, and later the electric, locomotive gradually replaced the steam engine, the potential of which had not been fully explored when it became obsolete. In Britain the obligations of the railway as a common carrier weakened its competitiveness, and the legacy of the great railway age - the proliferation of routes resulting from competition for traffic and from Parliament's fear of monopolies, the restrictive loading gauge, and the cost

of maintaining the infrastructure - impeded adaptation to new conditions of operation. In other countries the state's involvement with the railways from their beginnings made adaptation easier, but everywhere a new conception of the role of the railway had to be evolved. Unprofitable lines have been closed, less so in countries where state involvement favoured the maintenance of a public service; speedy, comfortable inter-city travel, and containerized and intermodal (in co-operation with road vehicles) methods of goods transport, all in conjunction with new electronic and computerized signalling, have been developed, and the instruments of the new age of the railway are beginning to appear. It is an age which will be dominated by electric traction as the first was by steam.

This remarkable history of an achievement which transformed the world and human life, and which is not yet played out, is chronicled by G. Freeman Allen, son of that distinguished student of railway affairs, and expert on "locomotive practice and performance" Cecil J. Allen, in this authoritative and well-produced book. Packed with facts, it never lapses into dullness, and is enlivened by many amusing and illuminating touches, such as the fatalistic advertisement of the Baltimore and Ohio line that a wagon loaded with bales of cotton would be interspersed between the engine and its coaches to protect travellers when the locomotive "explodes". The text is copiously illustrated with photographs, charts and coloured pictures. These last are usually accurate and true in colour, though something seems to have gone wrong with a picture of a 1900 Midland Railway express train in which coaches and engine are depicted not in the characteristic Derby livery of the period, but in something suggestive of North British green.

This apart, this is a book to be warmly commended, both for interesting reading and for reference. I know of no better treatment of its fascinating theme.

## Education of a knight

Arthur Terry

Curial and Gueifa

Translated by Pamela Waley  
287pp. Allen and Unwin. £9.95.  
0 04 823217 3

The original of *Curial and Gueifa* is an anonymous chivalric romance written in Catalan sometime between 1440 and 1460 by an author familiar with the topography of Northern Italy and Burgundy. As the translator explains, in her lucid though all too brief introduction, part of the interest of the book lies in its attempt to give a historical dimension to attitudes and modes of behaviour which clearly belong to the author's own time. Thus the action is set at a specific point in history: the reign of King Peter the Great of Aragón (1276-89), whose presence as an actual character accounts for some of the most vivid passages of the book. And in the course of the narrative, this strong "Catalan interest" is played off against

the fortunes of the chief protagonist, Curial, whose education, which begins and ends in Italy, provides the main theme of the story.

The preface makes it clear that Curial is to become an exceptional lover, as well as an outstanding knight, and the strategy employed by Gueifa, the young lady who decides to become his patroness, allows for both possibilities: "My intention is to make him a man, but I do not intend to give him my love but rather to make him worthy and valiant by giving him to understand that I love him." In personal terms, therefore, the purpose of Curial's education is to make him worthy of Gueifa, whom he eventually marries. Obstacles, inevitably, intervene: Curial's undistinguished origins lay him open to the hostility of some of the more snobbish characters; he himself is emotionally insecure, and his triumphant feats of arms are punctuated by his shifting relationship with the symbolically named Lachesia, the daughter of the Duke of Bavaria, and by the intermittent anger of Gueifa, at what she takes to be his infidelity.

## Call

The shipwright's beauty, who butchers the forest,  
Dresses it again in shining sails,

Garments like blossom,

And naited with new iron like budding grain,  
With big ship-booms full of wonderful fruit  
And men of unbelievable expertise  
Of knowledge of the stars and winds;

You serve branching ocean routes  
As though the whole sea were a sailing-tree  
And the ships were blossom on it  
Gilding slowly  
On its world-embracing boughs  
Transferring goodness and prosperity;

You give then yare names:  
Tidesource, Ocean Moon;  
And their travellers a berth of womb  
In the big-belly blown along  
By blinding blossom;

And others dig  
And uncover the scarlet iron  
And with fire you forge bells and sounding hells  
And the great mines of iron feather on the waters  
The heaviest stone sails the wide sea  
Or in the dusty dry dock  
Resounds to its making  
As a cathedral calls out to its glad city to serve.

Peter Redgrove

And later in the novel, Futune intervenes in person in order to test Curial's powers of resistance: he is captured by pirates and becomes a slave in Tunis, where his subsequent adventures lead him from the world of chivalry into that of the Byzantine novel.

Just before it is what one can only describe as a cultural gesture, Curial visits Mount Parnassus, where the Muses appear to him in a dream and ask him to adjudicate between Homer's version of the siege of Troy and that of the (non-existent) historians Dictys and Dares. Such an episode, together with the author's frequent classical allusions, seems like a deliberate, and unsuccessful, attempt to assimilate the novel of chivalry to the world of fifteenth-century humanism. *Curial and Gueifa*, that is, the world of late medieval narratives, contains anomalies and contradictions which cannot be explained by superimposing more modern notions of unity. Though, as Dr Waley rightly claims, the behaviour of Curial and Gueifa is "far more complex than is usual in medieval fiction", it would be wrong to expect the kind of psychological consistency one finds in more recent novels. One can hardly fail to be struck, for instance, by the way in which certain characters are made to switch abruptly from one mood to another - from love to aversion - with little or no motivation, as if to demonstrate the arbitrary workings of Fortune. Moreover, despite these sudden veerings of mood, it is clear that the general "character" of the protagonists remains virtually unchanged throughout the novel, so much so that there is no real sense of the passage of time.

This means that, in terms of narrative structure, the problem is to find a way of sustaining a large-scale fiction without the need for character development. In *Curial and Gueifa*, a number of devices contribute towards a solution: descriptions of tournaments and "epitaphs" set speeches, dreams, erudite digressions and, occasionally, the introduction of mythological or allegorical machinery. This might make for a rather static kind of novel, were it not for the energy and movement displayed in many of the individual episodes. It is, in fact, in the specifically chivalric parts of the book that the author shows his greatest gifts as a narrator: not only in the accurate and skillfully varied accounts of feats of arms, but also in the good-humoured, lively, and in the good episode in which Curial is entertained for the night in a French convent and in the very different kind of episode which surrounds the figure of Lachesia.

This cannot have been an easy book to translate. It only because of the diversity of registers it employs and its meticulously detailed descriptions of heraldry and knighthood protocol. Dr Waley's version is resourceful, accurate and eminently readable.

Moreover, in both content and narrative technique, this story of an imaginary knight is able to build on the kind of expectations which have already been created by earlier historical and literary texts, notably by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century chronicles of Desclot and Muntaner. The existence of such works, which must, one imagines, have made it relatively easy for a fifteenth-century Catalan writer to make the transition to genuine fiction, is particularly to a kind of fiction which continues to feed on real-life characters and events. Thus the author of *Curial and Gueifa* not only, like the earlier chroniclers, intervenes at many points in his text, but also continues to use the same forms of address to his readers - "what shall I say?" "now I shall tell you about", and so on - as his models.

It has often been said, with some justice, that *Curial and Gueifa* describes a code of manners which is beginning to disintegrate. It would be equally correct to say, on the other hand, that the best parts of the book are convincing precisely because the author is writing about what he believes in, and to connect this with the deliberate revival of chivalry which took place in both Spain and France from the late fourteenth century onwards. Whatever the truth of this, *Curial and Gueifa*, with its lapses and inconsistencies, still deserves to be read as a serious work of fiction. Its peculiar mixture of the real and the imaginary is not quite like anything else in the European literature of the time, and even for an uninitiated reader it creates a sharply etched world which is often compelling because of its very strangeness. For the serious student of narrative, there is additional interest in so far as it suggests the ways in which late medieval romance is already beginning to open up in certain directions which will eventually make possible more sophisticated types of fiction. (By a curious coincidence, one of Julia Kristeva's last essays on semantics and narrative, "The Bounded Text", is based on an analysis of Antoine de Sale's *Le petit Jehan de Saintré* (1456), a book which is sometimes cited as a possible model for the early chapters of *Curial and Gueifa*.)

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# The Achaemenids in action

P. R. S. Moorey

J. M. Cook

The Persian Empire  
275pp. Dent, £12.95.  
0 460 04448 6

Much of the history of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c 550-330 bc) was memorably written long ago by the greatest of Greek historians. When their record has not survived, we remain largely ignorant; where it is deficient or obscure there are still very few independent sources to which we may turn. Their narratives were so skilful that what did not interest them has tended not to interest us and where they judged, by Greek standards, we have all too easily concurred. The main thrust of Cook's intention to distinguish clearly between reliable fact and accumulated conjecture, is

those of Dandamaev and Hinz, have tended to concentrate on the earliest and greatest of the Achaemenid kings. Publication of archaeological research remains characteristically intermittent and specialist.

Following Rawlinson's dictum about writing the history of Oriental monarchies, whenever sources permit, Cook has focused his substantial biographical studies of the army and imperial organization are appropriately interleaved into the history of the Empire to the death of Xerxes; a watershed in the sources reached over halfway through the book. The greater part of the remaining portion embraces chapters devoted to such topics as the king and the court, art and architecture, religion and imperial administration. The main thrust of Cook's intention to distinguish clearly between reliable fact and accumulated conjecture, is

well effected throughout. If Olmstead's remains the fullest account of the Persian Empire, Cook's is certainly now the most reliable.

It is unfortunate that in such an arrangement the freshest and more original passages are in the later chapters and in a thoughtful epilogue. If modern study of the Achaemenid Empire is to break the traditional mould, it is away from king and court, trumpet and drum, that most is likely to be done. Being the region best known to classical writers and the richest in ancillary sources, Turkey, as recent essays by Hanfmann and Starr have shown, is the ideal place to start, and here Cook is particularly at home. In Turkey it is possible to ask, and in some measure to begin to answer, a fresh set of questions about the socio-economic character of the Persian Empire and degrees of cultural interaction. In Babylonia, relatively well documented, and to a lesser extent

in Egypt and Palestine, this is also increasingly possible; but progress in synthesis is inhibited by the special knowledge needed in each case to handle local sources. Cook acknowledges that this is a difficulty he has not wholly resolved; nor yet has anyone else.

More has, however, been done in recent years than is apparent here to return a more truly Oriental perspective to Achaemenid studies. Belatedly, in his epilogue, Cook confronts this key issue with ideas that might profitably have been developed through his narrative. His evident knowledge of the rich literature of Persian travel, with its astute observations on timeless custom and remarkably enduring institutions, is now too rare an asset in an ancient historian to be exploited only in the last paragraph. Its potential, as is there made clear, for diversifying current approaches to the Achaemenid

Empire is considerable and deserves at least an essay from Professor Cook. Margaret Root's *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (1979) does not seem to have reached him in time for account to be taken of in Achaemenid's original chapter. The analysis may at times be over-ambitious, but it offers the first systematic investigation of how the early, century Achaemenid rulers conceived the Empire and how they may have wished others to see it. We have long known what it was about the Persians who fascinated the Greeks and what was not so clear before Cook has shown us clearly. But what it was that preoccupied the Persians themselves he rarely tells us, for they engaged from realms of thought and ideas that Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon could not know and what we are only just beginning to comprehend.

## Invasion-prone

C. M. Woodhouse

DAVID HUNT (Editor)

Footprints in Cyprus: An illustrated history  
300pp. Trigraph Limited, 21/25 Earl Street, London EC2A 2HY.  
£17.95.  
0 950926 0 3

"Cyprus never has been Greek" was the famous slogan thirty years ago. But what else has it ever been? This handsome book (the first publication of a new house) provides a full answer: Phoenician, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Roman, Arab, Frankish, Venetian, Turkish, British. Some of the invaders left significant marks on the island (footprints, in the phrase of the title) and some permanently changed and enriched it. But at least since the fourteenth century so the Greeks have been the only native element (and by far the largest) in the population which can claim an unbroken continuity.

The slogan of the 1950s is replaced by the editor's succinct conclusion that "nothing happened in Cyprus which could be paralleled elsewhere in Greece. There was nothing to modify the essential character of the Great Greek island." But that is not to say that the island's civilization did not develop in separate ways from the Greek mainland. Every chapter in

the book shows punctiliously that it did so, without compromising the unquestionable conclusion.

In early times, the art of writing introduced by the Phoenicians never disappeared, as it did in mainland Greece in the post-Mycenaean age. The language steadily deviated from mainland Greek, as it does today. To a greater extent than on the mainland, religious leaders exercised economic and political power. Monarchies survived in Cyprus for generations after most mainland cities had become republics. One of the most momentous events in Christian times was the grant of autocephaly to the Cypriot Church by a fifth-century Roman emperor (who bore, curiously enough, the name of the only great Cypriot philosopher, the Stoic Zeno). Thus was laid the foundation of Makarios's power as Archbishop and President fifteen centuries later.

The early chapters are written by professional archaeologists: Peltenbong, Karageorghis, and Nicholas Coldstream from the Neolithic Age to the Early Iron Age, Tatton-Brown from the Archaic to the Hellenistic. Bach is an outstanding expert, though none of them has the gift of making ancient history exciting for the amateur reader. For him or her the interest begins with the entry of Sir David Hunt and Sir Steven Runciman, who share the rest of the book from the Roman period to the present day.

Because so many foreigners

occupied Cyprus for relatively short periods, the island's history consists largely of overlapping slices of other peoples' histories. Their motives were imperialist or strategic, but often of a peculiar kind. They wished to deny Cyprus to their rivals rather than to exploit it for themselves. The Romans maintained no garrison on the island. The Crusaders occupied it in what has been called elsewhere a fit of absence of mind. The Turks swallowed it up as part of a general expansion in which Islam regarded itself as being in a state of permanent war with all infidels. The British took it over to safeguard Turkey against Russian aggression.

Of all the invaders only the Crusaders left an indelible mark on the landscape, with the introduction of Frankish Gothic architecture, both ecclesiastical and military. The Turks left a different but equally enduring legacy of rival nationalities and religions, but the two main

## Questioning the earth

J. M. Cook

GEORGE RAFF JR and JOHN A. GIFFORD (Editors)  
The Archaeological Geology, Supplementary Monograph 4  
209pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press, £40.90.  
0 691 03559 8

This supplementary monograph is more than archaeological geology: in its use of pollen analysis and the very pseudo-geological phytoliths the book is partly concerned with the biological sciences; and this part commands respect. It cannot answer questions, however, from the samples provided it can indicate that wheat may have been cultivated from early Troy, but it cannot tell us whether olives, vines and valonia oaks were grown in prehistoric times. What it can do is to tell the archaeologist what questions to ask the site if he should ever excavate it again.

Schliemann excavated Troy conscientiously. He brought in specialist scientists and he left "islands" so that future archaeologists could test his stratification. Blegen used the latter when he meticulously excavated what remained of Troy in 1932-38. Near the end of the 1937 season he had 360 soil (now "sedimentary matrix") samples taken from stratified points and stored in Cincinnati in the hope that some day they might be investigated. Unlike most such hoards they were not thrown away, and in 1975 a team of specialists in half a dozen disciplines got to work on them. In support of this, correlative work was carried out in the vicinity of Troy in 1977.

The most startling "palaeo-environmental" chapters come from what used to be called the earth-scientists. Here interpretation is attempted. Some slight support does seem to be provided for Blegen's claim

that Troy VI(b) - the Priam's Troy Dörpfeld - was destroyed by earthquake rather than enemy war, but the seismological tables do purport to prove that Troy had a "high-risk seismic zone" - a relationship to what has (and has generally has not) been noticed by inhabitants of the Troad.

The new geomorphological constructions based on the drilling of prehistoric Troy as striking of the thumb into a bay and the deepening of the plain as still a deep depression in Strabo's time (c.200 BC). The book is demonstrably wrong because Herodotus and Strabo. On the periphery as well as the center, the provided here the error would be mainly due to the adoption of an archaeologically untenable hypothesis of an "eustatic curve" (the great level) which may have involved an average displacement of the coastline by two to three kilometres in the reconstruction. The controversies then arise that he and the Beshika and the Beshika resuscitated: "If we believe in the thousand ships and ten-year siege of Beshika on the Aegean coast, the course known to be the nearest to the stretch of beach. But a present of the Forty Springs was situated five or more feet into the sea, and the later Hellenistic and the later Hellenistic. Some chapters of published work would have been these chapters much better than the and the conclusions differed. The positive result is the "eustatic" hypothesis on which the Beshika is based; but it does not seem probable that Priam's Troy, appreciably nearer the Hellespont than the scholars of a hundred ago thought.

## TUDOR HISTORY

ALISTAIR FOX  
Thomas More: History and Providence  
771pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £17.50.  
0 631 13094 2

THOMAS MORE  
The Complete Works, Volume 6: A Dialogue Concerning Heresies  
Edited by Thomas M. C. Lawler, Germaine Marc'hadour and Richard C. Martin  
500pp. Yale University Press, £56.  
0 300 02211 5  
The Complete Works, Volume 9: The Apology  
Edited by J. B. Trapp  
566pp. Yale University Press, £29.75.  
0 300 02067 8

It is a notable instance of the power of Thomas More's character that every age and interest annexes him as its own hero. Even Henry VIII's loyal chroniclers could not deny his heroic status. The Catholic apologists made him the first and greatest martyr of the beleaguered papacy. The rediscovery of Roger's life brought him back to the English pantheon as humanist scholar, Henry VIII's good genius, but above all as the hero of his family, a picture suited for Victorian ideals by that now-famous novel *The House of the Dead* by Thomas More. In our own time Robert Bolt has given us the Man for all Seasons.

What sort of man More really was, what he believed, even what he said and wrote - all this has hitherto seemed less important than fitting the heroic elements to make our own image. But now Alistair Fox has righted the balance. He has taken the voluminous evidence of More's writings, from the early years of devotion to the last works in the Tower, and compared it with the portrait, more human than ideal, but no less heroic for the frailties revealed, wholly sympathetic and wonderfully convincing. It is, in short, the best book on Thomas More's life and writings to appear since E. K. Chambers's, nearly fifty years ago.

For argument, in brief, is that More's complex and private character was, from the outset, formed by two contrasting stresses, the urge to withdraw from a world made imperfect by man and the urge to participate in what God's design for the world might be better fulfilled. Signs of this can be seen in the early works, notably the life of Pico della Mirandola and the

translations of Lucian. It stands fully revealed in *Utopia*, not only in the dialogue on whether to take service in the state, but also in the text; the Utopians are "successful Certhusian mercenaries, the governing of whom would allow him to bring the cloister into the court, where he already knew he might be headed". More's own dualism is reflected in the dialogue of Hythlodæus and Morus:

By choosing to opt for the political role of Morus, More must have believed that he was affirming the same faith as the Utopians. His trust in providence was revealed in his readiness to commit himself to action, not in any confidence that his course was definitively the best. On the contrary, he knew from the outset that his political career was fraught with moral dangers, but he knew equally that Hythlodæus' way was more perilous because it ended in a negation of human responsibility, both temporal and spiritual.

Belief in providence, the working out of the pattern revealed in the past, was deep in More's being. It emerges in the history passages. It explains the *History of Richard III*, where Cardinal Morton is presented as the type of acting in the world "so as to make as little bad as possible what cannot be made entirely good". The treatise *The Four Last Things* is a spiritual reaction to firsthand experience of life at court, in particular the show-trial of the Duke of Buckingham.

It was at this point that More finally embarked on the course that led irrevocably to Tower Hill. Commanded to answer Luther's attack on Henry VIII and immersed in legal and court business, he became the reluctant apologist of the state in which he was also Lord Chancellor. His own attitude was different.

He had come to accept that truth was as liable to be grasped through the experience of paradox - and ambiguity as it was through absolute, rational definition. To this end he had evolved a mode of literary depiction capable of representing how contradictions may merge themselves in a higher truth that comprehends them. His own inclination towards poetry and history, rather than pure philosophy or history, sprang from his belief that truth, especially religious truth, was neither self-evident nor complete in every respect, because its revelation was an historical process.

Believing this, More's image of controversialists as "very much like to men fighting naked among piles of stones: each has plenty of weapons, neither has any defence" is all too apt.

This aspect of More's writing is vast and forbidding but thoroughly familiar to Fox. He has carefully pieced together the strands of More's doctrinal approach: he shrewdly points out that More's special antipathy for Luther was based on similarity of temperament, and that there is an implicit analogy between the Law and the Church ("both were institutional instruments through which the virtues of divine and natural law could be developed in history"). The collapse of his analogy in real life was the seed of More's destruction.

Fox's articulation of More's controversial writing with his political career is equally convincing. Following the brilliant reconstruction, in John Guy's *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (1980) which does for the private More what Fox has done for the private More, of his part in opposing the extremist course urged on Henry VIII by the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and, with final success, by Cromwell, Fox shows how More fought a battle on two fronts, overtly opposing the "poisoned books" of the reformers, but also tacitly countering the machinations of his political opponents. Like Morton, More knew and told Tyndale that "if we be not only simple as doves, but also prudent as serpents, his [God's] inward union will work with our diligence". At the back of it all More knew that Christendom was at stake: it was better to shore up imperfect unity than accelerate disastrous fragmentation.

Fox is inclined to read too much personal involvement in the bitterness of the later controversy, and to see the innermost beliefs at risk. There is a rather finely balanced point at which the lawyer's argument of every issue and refusal to concede anything were subsumed in personal horror at the pervasiveness of heresy and the collapse of his policy. What is certain is that his resignation and imprisonment brought a great sense of relief: *A Dialogue of Comfort* brings back the old More, easy, humorous and tolerant, and the *De Trinitate* finds him finally making his peace with God, the all-in-all of his earthly life.

Inevitably, treatises against heresy, heretics and heretical books occupy the

major part of the substantial folio of More's works published in 1557. He saw, earlier than most, the dangers of Lutheranism added to latent Lollardy, now surcharged with an increasingly anticlerical court bias. The formal invitation extended by Cuthbert Tunstall in 1528 to write counterblasts to the increasing number of heretical books was only part of a campaign in which canon and common law were united to get rid of heretics, by abjuration preferably, but if not, by driving them abroad or, ultimately, by the stake. It was not a pleasant business, but one that More took with the seriousness it demanded. *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* was the first of More's tracts, a Platonic dialogue written in a more leisurely, persuasive vein than his later pieces, when increasing danger added gall to his ink. The speakers are More himself and "the Messenger" sent by an old friend to More because he has doubts - tradition suggests that these may reflect William Roper's brief infection with Lutheranism. It is, for all its length, a lively and readable piece, written with all the vitality and subtlety and humour of which More was master. The issues - dependence on scripture alone, justification by faith, the current writings and lives of Luther and others - are dealt with discursively, but persuasively: the Messenger says farewell, his doubts assuaged. The text, set out with the care common to all the Yale editions of *The Complete Works*, is buttressed with ample exegesis by Thomas M. C. Lawler and Germaine Marc'hadour, setting the historical scene and emphasising the importance of scripture in the debate. Richard C. Martin reflects usefully on More's sources.

Both these Yale texts were finished too soon to take account of Guy's work. J. B. Trapp's account of the work of More's public career, published from this; all the more pity since his editorial preface is one of the most substantial and authoritative contributions to More scholarship that the Yale edition has elicited, notably fair in its assessment of all the controversial issues. By 1553 More is embittered by the state of his country, and in Fox's last letter of their errors with a dogged determination that seems to ask when all this will end. In the interval, he and Tyndale have identified each other as chief antagonists, but Tyndale has many allies, while More is increasingly isolated. In the *Apology* he defends himself carefully against all malicious

progress was made? The omission is serious, because general economic and social "problems" seem too heavily stressed in this book as causes of specific disorders, particularly enclosures, which Beer has exhaustively examined and which seem excessively prominent in terms of the wider perspective.

The rebellions of Edward VI's reign were a *crisis de coeur* by common men outside the bounds of accepted political action, who appealed for good lordship, justice and a brave new world, in face of impossible odds. We need to know more about their lives, property, environment, and social habits - the samples used to compile the tables in Chapter Eight are absurdly small, at most one per cent of the persons involved. It may be symbolic that Beer's maps are devoid of topographical detail (eg. roads, rivers, moors, etc) and scale. His essay is a useful contribution but it is time historians stopped mulling about enclosures, Commonwealth men, and the Phelps-Brown price index, and turned in depth to geography, the culture of the common man, and those King's Bench sources.

The latest volume of the *Annual Bibliography of British and Irish History* (Publications of 1981) has been published by the Society for the History of the Book, under the general editorship of G. R. Elton (1980). Brighton: Harvester/Advent. Hg. £22.50. 0 391 0278 9 0.

## Empire style

Margaret Lyttelton

FRANK SEAR

Roman Architecture  
288pp. Batsford, £25 (paperback, £9.95).  
0 7134 4097 X

Another history of Roman architecture might seem superfluous after the detailed and authoritative *Ernst Curtius and Roman Architecture* by A. Boethius and J. Ward-Perkins (Penguin, 1970), but the buildings of ancient Rome exercise a powerful fascination. Their gigantic ruins still dominate the townscapes of modern Rome, while the imposing remains of abandoned Roman cities stretch from Morocco to the Syrian desert. The reputation of Classical architecture and the level of interest in the buildings of ancient Rome have fluctuated widely since the Renaissance. Classical architecture was an inspiration to the eighteenth century, and, at times, snaphoma to the nineteenth. "Does any living soul in London like triglyphs?" demanded Ruskin. In a number of recent buildings the elements of Classical architecture have come once more into prominence: in Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans a stylish and scintillating Corinthian capital forms the centre of a fountain, while Corinthian and Ionic

columns articulate the façades.

Frank Sear's *Roman Architecture* is attractive and carefully presented. It is aimed primarily at students. Hence it has the virtues of being clear, concise and readable rather than of being comprehensive and encyclopaedic, like the books of Crema and Ward-Perkins, or brilliantly innovative, like that of W. MacDonald. It is an extraordinarily difficult task to cover in less than 300 pages the vast subject of Roman architecture, with its diverse aspects of design, construction and decoration; and to include the numerous regional variations in buildings spread out over a vast empire. Dr Sear has rightly concentrated his space and his attention on the buildings of Italy, particularly those of Rome, Ostia and Pompeii. There are two particularly instructive chapters, one on Roman building types, both public and private, and the second on arches and on building methods. In the latter the revolution in architectural style made possible through developing to the full the potentialities of construction in concrete is clearly explained; this dramatic change from the sculpted, linear forms of the Greek and Hellenistic past to the soaring domes and canopied volumes of the later Roman and Byzantine periods lies at the heart of the achievement of Roman architecture.

Sear's book is well illustrated with a large number of photographs, plans

and drawings, many of them new. Throughout the book architectural developments are related to historical events and to changes in society. Tracing architectural development in Italy, Sear begins with the buildings of the early Republic and goes down to the great buildings of the emperor Hadrian's reign. The final chapter describes the architecture of the late Empire in both the capital and the provinces. The choice of buildings discussed is necessarily highly selective, and most buildings are succinctly described, but in the case of some exceptional works, like Hadrian's Villa and the Pantheon, Sear rightly disregards the limitations of space, and dissects these buildings in illuminating detail.

The later sections of the book on the architecture of the Roman provinces are mostly too brief to be entirely satisfactory; it is impossible to do justice to the rich architecture of Asia Minor in four pages, as Sear attempts. Roman France is also cursorily treated, so it is perhaps misleading that the striking photographs on the jacket (both taken by Sear) are of the Pont du Gard and the amphitheatre at Nîmes - this might suggest a greater concentration on the architecture of the provinces than is the case. However, the strength and interest of this book lies in its treatment of the architecture of the heart of the empire, and its heart of the subject.

columns articulate the façades. Frank Sear's *Roman Architecture* is attractive and carefully presented. It is aimed primarily at students. Hence it has the virtues of being clear, concise and readable rather than of being comprehensive and encyclopaedic, like the books of Crema and Ward-Perkins, or brilliantly innovative, like that of W. MacDonald. It is an extraordinarily difficult task to cover in less than 300 pages the vast subject of Roman architecture, with its diverse aspects of design, construction and decoration; and to include the numerous regional variations in buildings spread out over a vast empire. Dr Sear has rightly concentrated his space and his attention on the buildings of Italy, particularly those of Rome, Ostia and Pompeii. There are two particularly instructive chapters, one on Roman building types, both public and private, and the second on arches and on building methods. In the latter the revolution in architectural style made possible through developing to the full the potentialities of construction in concrete is clearly explained; this dramatic change from the sculpted, linear forms of the Greek and Hellenistic past to the soaring domes and canopied volumes of the later Roman and Byzantine periods lies at the heart of the achievement of Roman architecture.

Sear's book is well illustrated with a large number of photographs, plans

## Revolt short of revolution

J. A. Guy

BARRETT L. BEER  
Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI  
259pp. Kent State University Press. (distributed in the UK by Europa). £16.  
0 87338 269 2

Most themes of Tudor history have been revitalized in recent years by revisionist monographs. Yet rebellions, for decades standard items of burgled undergraduate diet, have attracted few new champions. A trickle of books and articles has appeared, but for the most part either the old-fashioned narrative form has persisted, or only one rebellion has been addressed at a time.

The need for comparison, and a general theme, is paramount. For what defined rebellion? In the sixteenth century, dynastic, religious, social or economic aspirations might be present in any combination; the common man might be led, or cruelly opposed, by his social superiors; the "rebels" might be mere "camping" "squatters" or wandering peasants, inspired by a vision of social justice; mob violence might be premeditated and coherent, or simply mindless - and so on. A rebellion might even be quietly successful, as was that against Wolsey's

Amicable Grant, in which case few historians will recognize revolt for what it was, perhaps because no blood was spilt.

Yet two things are certain. First, rebellions expressed some form of public opinion, even if minority, or sectional opinion. Second, no Tudor rebellion aimed at total revolution, and destruction of the familiar system of government. Since the established order traditionally quashed rebellions by force, or conciliation followed by force, the latter feature is distinctly odd. There is more to Tudor rebellions than meets the eye.

Barrett L. Beer has written a competent and useful essay in which the disorders of Edward VI's reign are placed in national perspective. The author seeks to anatomize rebellion as much as to describe it. The death of Henry VIII, and ascendancy of the obnoxious, vacillating Protector Somerset, created something of a vacuum at the centre, which was filled locally by the falls of the Courtenays in Devon and the Howards in East Anglia. The major rebellions of the reign occurred in Devon and Cornwall, and in East Anglia - but vacuum is not itself a sufficient explanation. Riot and civil commotion were virtually ubiquitous from 1547 to 1550, save in the north, where memories of the ill-fated Pilgrimage of Grace were perhaps still fresh. If it is clear that Somerset's collapse and the rise of Northumberland, and tactical religious

changes coincided with his enclosure commissions and sheep tax, a platform which perpetuated rumours that the Protector was on the side of the poor against the rich, rising population and prices, and a poor harvest in 1549 contributed to destabilization. And there was continuity with the past: the Western rebellion was fired by men from St Keverne, the village where in 1497 the Cornish rebellion against Henry VII had erupted. The Suffolk rebellion focused upon Lavenham and surrounding hamlets, where disorders had detonated in Henry VIII's reign. The Hertfordshire commons rose at Cheshunt and Northaw, to reverberate echoes of the revolt of 1381.

Historians, ultimately, are prisoners of their sources, and Professor Beer, who has used those consulted by his predecessors, together with some selected records of the English bill courts, and the valuable registers of the City of London, is driven towards familiar conclusions. The Western rebellion was inspired primarily by religious conservatism, declining economic fortunes, and relative instability at county-government level. Men below gentry rank, mostly just below, were the leaders: the rising was opposed by the established gentry. The Western leaders had no military objectives beyond the capture of Exeter. Social conflict, and the depletion of local good lordships, and the depletion of the commons, were the motives of the rebellion in Norfolk, which was a "camping" variety, as Port of

resistance to the enclosure of common land and waste, a vision of alternative justice as revealed at the Tree of Reformation, the desire that bondsmen be made free, a burning issue on former Howard properties sadly relegated by Beer to a footnote, and the less specific agrarian misery that characterized the daily life of the Tudor peasantry. As in the west, the leaders of East Anglian protest were just below gentry status - outsiders to the political nation - who were opposed by the established gentry and aristocracy. But Ket did not seek to proliferate mob rule; his capture of the premier provincial city of Norwich was a "lost opportunity" - no "commune" or "Norwich" was set up. Such rebels were simply too nice to win; they would not destroy in order to build, deploring mindless violence.

Beer advises future researchers to focus on individual villages and precise local studies. Such work is currently being undertaken for East Anglia by D. MacCulloch, but it is puzzling that the author did not himself make a start for his chronological framework is really quite warty, and the matter is significant: Beer's most original contribution is to the question of urban unrest, especially in London, where riots and insurrection were frequent. Beer does not seem to have taken account of the work of the late Professor E. E. Schattschneider, who, in his *The Semisovereign People* (1960), argued that the "camping" variety was a form of

accusations; he also deals with St German's *Treatise Concerning the Division between the Spiritually and the Lally*, a threat treble serious - moderate in tone, written by a lawyer and perhaps an old friend, and an onslaught on the Church, notably the authority of the ecclesiastical courts.

More found this hard to take, and indeed to answer, since St German's case was an ingenious conflation of excerpts from irreproachable authorities such as Gerson, with a final "pacific" plea that every man should endeavour to attain by grace to "zeal of souls". The issue of conscience emerges again as More urges in reply "a good Christian mind to the maintenance of Christ's catholic faith, and that they therein stand by the old . . . and for the discerning thereof from all news, to stand to the common well-known belief of the common known catholic church of all Christian people". If, then, St German's examples were difficult to combat, his basic questioning of ecclesiastical authority undermined the concept of Christendom as the yardstick (so to speak) of conscience.

In a broader sense, conscience, the right or duty of the individual to measure his own conduct, was the basic issue that confronted all the participants in the conflict. King and Church, Chancellor and reformists, alike, it underlay the power politics around the "great matter", as well as More's attempt to suppress the reformers. But while More looked to the ideal of a united Christendom for salvation, Erasmus had been wiser in the ways of the world when he wrote to More in 1526, "In England this epidemic is more easily contained, because the whole matter depends on the will of one man." What neither More nor Erasmus could predict was that the epidemic would spread to the heart.

These were the forces that ultimately brought More down. But he, wiser than they, knew that this failure was to be his ultimate success. Implicit in his own last letter, explicit in Fox's admirable commentary, was More's understanding that this was a cause to die for. Always wary, he fought to the last, exploring every legal avenue of defence before he allowed the inevitable to destroy him. He knew, before he died, that his destruction would give him and (vastly more important) what he believed in an inextinguishable life and fame.

UP 11/150